

A snapshot of Canadian women for International Women's Day 2015 ^[1]

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EXCERPTS

March 8 is International Women's Day! The United Nations theme is 'Empowering Women -- Empowering Humanity: Picture It!'

Here's a snapshot of Canadian women and girls.

According to the website 'Justice for Murdered and Missing Indigenous Women,' Indigenous women are five times more likely to die as a result of violence. It's time for an inquiry into our murdered and missing Aboriginal women.

Recommendations from the inquiry must be implemented in a timely manner.

In 2009/2010 the Canadian Network of Women's Shelters and Transition Houses reported 103,000 women and children were admitted to shelters across the country. Every day over 8,200 women and children live in shelters to escape domestic violence. Many have no choice but to return to their abusers. Canadians need more second stage housing, micro-loans for furnishings, full time jobs with benefits and affordable child care now.

Pay Equity was implemented in 1987 when the gendered wage gap was 36 per cent. In 2010 the Conference Board of Canada reported the gap was 19 per cent. Canadians can't wait another 23 years to end this gendered discrimination.

Fields dominated by women, including child care and personal support work, are notorious for undervaluing employees. Historically, there's been less unionization in female sectors. Blatant discrimination in hiring, promotion and compensation practices disenfranchise women.

Women take time away from work due to family care-giving responsibilities and experience losses of seniority, advancement and wages. Women often settle for part-time and precarious positions with no benefits. These economic losses are permanent and contribute to the higher rate of poverty among older women noted by the Organization of Economic Co-operation and Development in its 2013 report. This gendered inequality needs to be remedied.

Cost of child care keeps women from working. In 2014 Statistics Canada found full-time child care for children aged four and younger was lowest in Quebec with a median cost of \$152 a month. Ontario had the highest cost for full-time child care with a median of \$677 a month. Affordable universal child care is needed now.

According to the Canadian Women's Foundation over one million single mothers in Canada are raising their children in poverty. A multifaceted approach is required to help these families. Finding full-time work with benefits is great, but the family may need affordable housing, food, affordable child care or bus tickets before the position can be accepted.

An easy way to empower Canadian women is to change the national anthem back to its original 1908 version: "True patriot love in all of us command." Encourage your MP to vote YES to Bill C-624 in April 2015. Canadians deserve an inclusive English National Anthem "all of us" can sing proudly!

It's been 31 years since the leaders of the national parties have debated women's issues. Canadians deserve to know which parties are committed to creating a truly gender-equal Canada. The NDP and Green Party are up for debate. Encourage the Liberals, Conservatives and Bloc to join the discussion.

On March 8 do something special for the women and girls in your life -- ensure the issues affecting 52 per cent of Canadians are #UpForDebate in the 2015 federal election campaign.

International and National media coverage of IWD 2015:

- International Women's Day: Women in Canada Need Child Care ^[3] Canadian Labour Congress
- The Future Of Work Must Also Deal With The Future Of Women At Work ^[4] The Gleaner
- Wage gap in Alberta focus of International Women's Day rally ^[5] Edmonton Sun
- Local women join thousands around world for International Women's Day ^[6] News1130
- We're a long way from true equality ^[7] Winnipeg Free Press
- What should the world do next for equal rights for women? ^[8] WGBH
- Stepping it up on the streets of New York City ^[9] UN Women

Region: International ^[10]

Tags: gender equality ^[11]

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Links

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