



**Economic Equality**



**Pay Equity** is not a privilege or a frill. It is the law. The right of those doing "women's work" to be paid on the same basis as the value of those doing "men's work" is a fundamental human right for Ontario women. It is guaranteed by provincial law.

The Harris/Eves Tory government made every attempt to weaken and undermine pay equity legislation in Ontario and removed their responsibility to uphold the legislation by withdrawing funding.

The McGuinty government has done nothing to undo the damage or to ensure working women in Ontario receive fair pay. There has been no action on pay equity funding to women who work in all-female workplaces (proxy sector) such as child care workers or shelter workers (approximately 100,000 women).

There has been no action on increasing funding to the Pay Equity Commission for public education or enforcement. There has been only silence on women's fundamental right to equity pay.

**Employment Equity** is another keystone to economic equality. It is proactive legislation to ensure women have employment opportunities at every level of the workplace. The past two decades have witnessed dramatic growth in the participation of women in the labour force. Despite this dramatic increase, the road to equality remains full of obstacles for all women. After over two decades of voluntary workplace equity programs, the barriers of workplace harassment, violence, lack of training and promotions, and lack of affordable quality childcare still exists.

Harris' first act in government was to repeal the NDP's Employment Equity Act. He then eroded the effectiveness of the Human Rights Commission by slashing funding. The McGuinty government's response - silence on proactive employment equity legislation.

**A fair wage** is the third key to economic equality. Over one million people in Ontario earn less than \$10 an hour. Most low wage jobs, 71%, are with fast food chains, retail giants, or temp agencies. 61% of Ontario's minimum wage earners are women. 31% of all women earn poverty wages (less than \$10/hr.) and 38% of women of colour are among the working poor. Aboriginal and recent immigrants make up a disproportionate share of low-wage earners. The Ontario government, under the McGuinty Liberals, recently voted themselves a 27% salary increase. Think about it - the raise alone is more than a full year's income of a worker earning minimum wage in Ontario.

**Since 2003 the McGuinty Liberals:**

- Have done nothing to fund pay equity in all-female workplaces such as child care centres, women's shelters or children's services.
- Have done nothing to improve enforcement of the Pay Equity Act.
- Have done nothing to ensure women have access to employment equity.
- Introduced significant changes to the Human Rights System in Ontario, with a number of negative consequences.

Premier McGuinty only increased the minimum wage after a massive grass roots campaign for a \$10 minimum wage swept the province – but phased in over 3 years.

**What Women Need**

We need legal rights to eliminate wage discrimination based on race, ethnicity and disability. We also need a Pay Equity Commission and Tribunal that has the resources to ensure pay equity is achieved and maintained for all women workers in Ontario.

Women need a government that will implement and support strong human rights legislation. We need a government that will address discriminatory hiring practices through proactive employment equity legislation. Women need a government to provide the funding necessary to fully enforce human rights legislation and pay equity adjustments owed to over 100,000 women. Women need a \$10 minimum wage now.

**Ask Your Local Candidate:**

- Is fully-funded and strong human rights legislation for women in Ontario a priority?
- Will your party restore proxy pay equity funding owed to over 100,000 women?
- If elected, would you support legislation to address race-based wage discrimination?
- If elected, will you introduce and pass proactive employment equity legislation?
- Do you believe that a living wage is a basic human right and would you increase the minimum wage to \$10 an hour immediately?

**For more details go to the following websites:**

Ontario Equal Pay Coalition:  
[www.equalpaycoalition.org](http://www.equalpaycoalition.org)

Ontario Needs A Wage Campaign:  
[www.incomesecurity.org/campaign](http://www.incomesecurity.org/campaign)

Ontario Coalition for Social Justice:  
[www.ocsj.ca](http://www.ocsj.ca)

One Million Reasons Campaign:  
[www.amillionreasons.ca](http://www.amillionreasons.ca)

Step It Up Ontario: [www.stepitupontario.ca](http://www.stepitupontario.ca)





