

Gender Equality Week Act

S.C. 2018, c. 14

Assented to 2018-06-21

An Act to establish Gender Equality Week

Preamble

Whereas the Parliament of Canada wishes to increase awareness of the significant and substantive contributions that Canadian women have made and continue to make to the growth, development, character and identity of Canada;

Whereas equality and compassion for all individuals remain among Canada's foremost aspirations and all Canadians share responsibility for addressing the social and economic challenges faced by women, which are fundamentally human issues;

Whereas many of the particular experiences and challenges faced by Canadian women and enumerated in this preamble are also experienced by individuals of minority gender identity and expression;

Whereas poverty and inequality disproportionately affect Canadian women, particularly elderly, disabled, transgender and visible minority women, leaving them isolated and vulnerable;

Whereas Canadians confronting issues related to gender identity and sexual orientation, particularly transgender women in visible minority groups, may experience further isolation and vulnerability, as well as violence;

Whereas the effects of poverty and vulnerability are exacerbated by limited access for women and their families to affordable housing, social support programs and child care services, as well as by gaps in Canada's health care system that cause women to be disproportionately underserved;

Whereas in Canada, women are more likely than men to be victims of gender-based violence, including sexual assault and intimate partner violence;

Whereas Indigenous women, be they First Nation, Métis or Inuit, are disproportionately affected by gender-based violence and sexual exploitation;

Whereas Canadian women who are physically, verbally and emotionally abused often face challenges in pursuing effective legal recourse and access to social support programs;

Whereas Canadian women face barriers in pursuing and completing post-secondary education and pursuing careers in the fields of science, technology, engineering and mathematics;

Whereas there is a wage gap between men and women in Canada;

Whereas Indigenous women face barriers with respect to equal access to education and employment, and representation in Canadian legislatures and councils;

Whereas women who are newcomers to Canada experience obstacles hindering their full participation in Canadian society, including a lack of access to language and employment training and a refusal to recognize their prior work experience and educational qualifications;

Whereas there has been a disproportionate rise in the number of female inmates, particularly Indigenous women, in Canada's correctional institutions;

Whereas Canadian women are underrepresented as participants and leaders in sports and physical activities, which affects their health and sense of social inclusion;

Whereas women account for approximately half of the population, yet a lower proportion of Canadian politicians are women;

Whereas Canadian women face challenges in being promoted to executive or board management positions, and those who do reach such positions are often paid less than men in similar positions;

Whereas the Government of Canada is encouraged to continue to monitor the progress, across departments and agencies, of the status of women in Canada;

Whereas the Parliament of Canada wishes to underscore the importance of celebrating and commemorating the notable achievements and advancements of Canadian women and addressing the challenges faced by Canadian women;

Whereas Parliament wishes to encourage all levels of government, non-governmental organizations, the private sector, academia, educators and all Canadians to recognize the fourth week in September as Gender Equality Week and to mark the week with events and initiatives to address the challenges Canadian women and individuals of minority gender identity and expression continue to face;

And whereas all Canadians, in particular men and those who do not identify as women, are encouraged to become and remain engaged, during Gender Equality Week and throughout the year, in achieving greater inclusiveness and full gender equality in Canada;

Now, therefore, Her Majesty, by and with the advice and consent of the Senate and House of Commons of Canada, enacts as follows:

Short Title

Short title

1 This Act may be cited as the *Gender Equality Week Act*.

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2 Throughout Canada, in each and every year, the fourth week in September is to be known as "Gender Equality Week".