

**REPORT TO THE STANDING COMMITTEE ON HUMAN RESOURCES,  
SKILLS AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT AND THE STATUS OF PERSONS WITH  
DISABILITIES FROM THE NATIONAL COUNCIL OF WOMEN OF CANADA**

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**INTRODUCTION**

The National Council of Women of Canada (the “NCWC”) was founded in 1893 when 1500 women came together in Toronto to establish an organization with a mandate to improve the quality of life of Canadians through education and advocacy. The organization now comprises 17 local Councils, 6 Provincial Councils and 21 Nationally Organized Societies representing women. All levels of the Council bring together women’s organizations in an umbrella structure along with individual members.

Historically members have been encouraged to participate and to take leadership in social action initiatives in their communities and in National debates on issues of concern. Part of that proud heritage is demonstrated by the work of Emily Murphy, Nellie McClung and Henrietta Muir Edwards, all members of NCWC, now identified with Louise McKinney and Irene Parlby as “The Famous Five”.

NCWC is an affiliate of the International Council of Women and holds consultative status with ECOSOC enabling NCWC to bring a Canadian perspective to the work of the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women. NCWC also participates as an observer Non-governmental Organization with the Permanent Council of the Organization of American States.

All levels of the Organization are closely connected with issues and have a firm grasp of international issues and Canada’s commitment to them.

All policy for NCWC is generated through resolutions originating with either local Councils or NCWC Committees. These are adopted through a democratic process at the Annual General

Meeting held each year in late May. Thus representatives speak from the united voice of the federated membership.

In its 117 year history NCWC has spoken out on many issues concerning Canadians. Some examples in the wide ranging policy of the organization: the support for hiring of women into the RCMP; building safety standards as they concern handicapped people; official recognition of the homemaker in Canada; the rights of Status of Indian women; elimination of the firearms registry; safeguarding of Canada's Arctic Sovereignty; land mines; the environment and nuclear energy/waste disposable; trafficking and child prostitution. See [www.ncwc.ca](http://www.ncwc.ca).

## **NOTES ON THE ELIMINATION OF THE LONG FORM CENSUS AS A MANDATORY REQUIREMENT OF CITIZENS**

The National Council of Women of Canada was disappointed in the decision of the Government of Canada to eliminate the long form census as a mandatory requirement of citizens and to changes that particularly apply to the removal of questions related to "unpaid work".

Since 1973 it has been NCWC policy to support the recognition of the contribution of unpaid work to a vibrant economy and to society, as cited in the following resolutions:

RESOLVED that the National Council of Women of Canada request the Government of Canada to seek ways and means of officially recognizing the contribution to the Canadian economy and to Canadian society of the homemaker or family home manager; and further that such classification be included in the Canadian Dictionary of Occupational Titles or whatever other appropriate publication is indicated and be used for the purpose of classification in the Census.

[adopted in 1973]

RESOLVED that the National Council of Women request the Government of Canada to give serious consideration to the wording of the questions in the Census to prevent any suggestion of discrimination to any peoples in Canada.

[adopted in 1974]

RESOLVED that the National Council of Women of Canada request the Government of Canada immediately to institute household surveys of a substantial size and complexity in order to establish the economic value of housework and volunteer community service for the purpose of inclusion in the Canadian Classification and Dictionary of Occupations.

[adopted in 1974]

RESOLVED that the National Council of Women of Canada request an occupational listing of unpaid caregiver/home manager/homemaker in the NOC/SDOC Dictionaries and further

That the National Council of Women of Canada call upon Statistics Canada in the next census to include

- questions on unpaid volunteer work
- questions on care of the disabled
- expand the number of hours of eldercare be reported in the census question
- continue to collect statistics on all unpaid work
- develop and provide information on time use surveys

[adopted in 1974]

It should be noted that Canada made commitments at the *1995 World Conference on Women in Beijing* and previous world conferences on women, specifically to the question that has been eliminated from the long form Census for 2011.

## **DISCUSSION**

The National Council of Women of Canada maintains that the information gathered in a voluntary census will compromise the reliability of the information collected and make the material unusable by other surveys. Almost all policy directed to family and community services is impacted by this data. Census questions are one way to keep attention focused. The removal of questions about unpaid work will have a negative impact on women, seniors and children through the potential to misdirect policy.

Based on information from the 2008 census two-thirds of Canada's unpaid work is being performed by women. As pointed out by Kathleen Lahey, a law professor at Queens University, the unpaid work economy is being removed from the data collection. The elimination of these questions suggests that work that has been traditionally identified as "women's work"<sup>1</sup> will not be measured. Lahey also points out that when governments look at care of the elderly, child care, discrimination against women and productivity, the information collected in the mandatory long census was central and crucial. Ian McKinnon of the National Statistics Council, while admitting such questions were vague, concedes that the General Social Survey and other Statistics Canada surveys will be less valuable in the future because it will not be able to benchmark results against the now-defunct mandatory long census.<sup>2</sup>

Rather, the questions about unpaid work should have been expanded. For example: to make a distinction between housework and caregiving by referencing the aspect of work benefiting others such that caregiving could mean that the caregiver may be foregoing other income to care for a person who cannot take care of themselves. More questions in the same vein would provide a more comprehensive picture of what is involved in gauging unpaid work. When the historical work of women is disregarded and work historically done by men is emphasized, the value of women's work will be diminished. Therefore, what in fact may be needed is more questions. It is time for the Government to admit that it can no longer take for granted the work done for the young, the elderly, sick, disabled and dying.

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.ctvbc.ctv.ca/servlet/an/local/CTVNews/20100728/census-conservatives-100728?hub=TorontoNewHome>

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid*

Taking care of others is work no matter how you look at it and deserves recognition as a benefit to the economy and society. Facetious remarks denying this reality cannot be tolerated. “Every time I see a mother with an infant, I know I am seeing a woman at work.” says economist Marilyn Waring, a former MP in New Zealand<sup>3</sup>. Women at home should not be considered unemployed.

The National Council of Women of Canada urges this Committee to 1) take immediate steps to support the re-instatement of the mandatory long form census including the questions around unpaid work, and 2) investigate ways to expand and/or make these questions more relevant so as to increase the reliability of the data.

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<sup>3</sup> <http://www.unpac.ca/economy/unpaidwork.html> taken from *"Counting for Nothing: What Men Value and What Women are Worth," 1999*

## APPENDIX

### 96.14PU Policy Update-Women as Family Caregivers

#### A. Recognition of Unpaid Work

1. That the National Council of Women of Canada request an occupational listing for unpaid caregiver/home manager/homemaker in the NOC/SOC Dictionaries.
2. That the National Council of Women of Canada call upon Statistics Canada in the next census to:
  - Include questions on unpaid volunteer work
  - Include the care of the disabled in the census question
  - Expand the number of hours of eldercare that can be reported in the census question
  - Continue to collect statistics on all unpaid work
  - Develop and provide information on time use surveys

#### B. Financial Security for the Caregiver

1. That a study be made of the impact of programs in other countries which provide basic income support to at-home parents and other caregivers, (including parental leave, family benefits, guaranteed income plans, special programs for single parents and remuneration for care giving);
2. That there be equitable tax treatment for one earner families;
3. That Canada maintains a pension plan based on individual and not family income. This pension plan should have a specific component recognizing the work done by parents in raising children, particularly women who withdrew from the labour market to do so.

#### C. Community Supports for the Family Caregiver

1. That funding be reallocated to support the shift from institutionally to community based care;
2. That there be coordinating of existing community based services to allow single entry by the client to the long term care system. This must include the coordination of existing formal volunteer service providers;
3. That advertising and dissemination of services be readily available at a wide variety of public venues. This information must pertain to all family care including care of the elderly, the disabled, children and palliative care;
4. That there be no off-loading of services which are a societal responsibility to the volunteer sector;
5. That innovative partnerships be developed between volunteer care providers. Community supports need to recognize the changing context of family care giving:
  - Changing family structures;
  - Geographic mobility;
  - Increased expectations of caregivers;

- Increased participation of women in the paid labour force.

#### **D. Balancing Work and Family**

1. That all levels of government establish a position and a protocol that will ensure that all public policy decisions and programs are evaluated and adjusted to be supportive of family well being;
2. That there be support for public, corporate, community and individual education to encourage attitudinal change which recognized the reality of balancing work and family in the 90's such as flex time, paid family leave days; solutions for school and day care hours conflicts; extended maternity leave;
3. That employment programs acknowledge and respond to the transitional needs of families when individuals, especially parents are re-entering the work force;
4. That new approaches be developed for economic planning and development, resulting in sustained human and social ecological development as well as economic growth; the real productivity (in paid and unpaid labour) to be included in measures of growth/wealth in addition to GDP;
5. That the government be reminded to recognize the existing UN protocols supporting family well-being and agreed to be Canada at Conferences in Nairobi, Copenhagen, Cairo, Beijing and the World Summit on Children in New York;
6. That the three levels of government as well as the corporate sector (including small business), and the NGO sector develop family friendly policies initiatives;
7. That the following legislation and resulting policies be designed/implemented at the appropriate government level in support of family well being:
  - Minimum of six days of universal (i.e. public and private) family care leave;
  - Extension of parental leave;
  - Flex time;
8. That the costs of paid employment and the costs of unpaid work be recognized in tax policy so that no family is disadvantaged by the care giving choices made.