

jHonourable Chrystia Freeland  
Minister of Finance  
Government of Canada

Dear Minister Freeland

Re: National Child Care Program

The National Council of Women of Canada (NCWC) is a non-profit non-governmental organization (NGO) currently composed of Local Councils in cities from Halifax to Vancouver, Provincial Councils in Quebec, Ontario, Saskatchewan, Manitoba, Alberta, and British Columbia, and several Nationally Organized Societies. For the past 127 years, the NCWC has worked to improve the quality of life for women, children, and families in Canada.

On behalf of the members of the National Council of Women of Canada (NCWC), once again I urge you to establish a national child-care program. The NCWC has advocated for decades to have affordable, accessible child-care as a focus in our mutual efforts to support women's equality.

While the onset of Covid-19 has exacerbated the issue for women in the workforce, this is not new. Affordable, accessible child-care was a key recommendation of the Report of the Royal Commission on the Status of Women published in 1970 and led by our colleague, Laura Sabia, who was the President of the Canadian Federation of University Women (CFUW). Action on this recommendation is long overdue as fifty years later, we are still waiting for this to become a reality.

The fiftieth anniversary of the RCSW brings with it the unique opportunity to celebrate that it was the impetus for numerous positive social actions and the modification to sections 15 and 28 of the Canadian constitution. Unfortunately, it also brings with it the awareness of the need to implement the remainder of the 167 recommendations that will improve the status and well-being of women and children across Canada. We must remain fully focussed on the future, a future that allows all Canadian women to enjoy the same freedoms and successes as men. To do so, we must have universal, accessible, affordable child-care.

The United Nations Secretary-General António Guterres, the World Trade Organization, and numerous Canadian economists agree women have been the most severely impacted by the pandemic. Some have dubbed it a 'she-cession' of slow economic growth that will only be further hindered by women having to make the difficult choice between their careers and caring for their children.

Prime Minister Trudeau acknowledged this fact in the September throne speech as he pledged to create this national system. Minister Freeland, you have also stated, "Canada cannot be competitive until all Canadian women have access to an affordable child-care system that we so desperately need to support our participation in the work force.

WWI led to the right for women to vote at the federal level following the suffrage movement prior to the war; the depression led to changes in the economic security of women with the beginning of a government pension. Many other crises in Canadian history have led to improvements in the status of women in Canada.

The National Council of Women of Canada urges you to ensure the legacy of the COVID-19 pandemic is a universal child-care program that will empower women and improve the quality of life for Canadian women and children.

Sincerely

Patricia Leson, President  
National Council of Women of Canada

\*Text composed with the assistance of Monica Cullum, NCWC Convenor

***The National Council of Women of Canada (NCWC) works in the spirit of truth and reconciliation, acknowledging Canada is the traditional territory of Indigenous and Metis People. We are grateful to join with others in peace and hope, advocating for an improved quality of life for women, children, families, and society.***

C: Honourable Maryam Monsef, Minister of Women and Gender Equality  
Honourable Ahmed Hussen, Minister of Families, Children and Social Development.