



HOUSE OF COMMONS
CHAMBRE DES COMMUNES
CANADA



Sheila Malcolmson

**Member of Parliament
Nanaimo—Ladysmith**

Parliamentary Office

House of Commons
Ottawa, Ontario
K1A 0A6

Phone: (613) 992-5243
Fax: (613) 992-9112

Community Office

495 Dunsmuir St, Suite 103
Nanaimo, British Columbia
V9R 6B9

Phone: (250) 734-6400
Fax: (250) 734-6404

Sheila.Malcolmson@parl.gc.ca
www.SheilaMalcolmson.ndp.ca

SheilaMalcolmsonNDP
 s_malcolmson
 SheilaMalcolmsonNDP

The Honourable Maryam Monsef
Minister of Status of Women
Status of Women Canada

October 16th 2018

Dear Minister Monsef,

Best wishes for Women's History Month! This week, as you meet with the provincial and territorial ministers responsible for the Status of Women, I urge you to make history and prove your government walks its talk on women's rights.

Women would have more to celebrate if your government got to work to fix the fundamental inequality women face, especially senior, racialized, and Indigenous women.

Ending violence and removing barriers to women's economic justice should be the national priorities you address with Status of Women Ministers across Canada. Canadian women have been waiting decades for the federal government to keep its promises on women's equality.

But after nearly three years in power, your government has yet to introduce pro-active pay equity legislation, national universal childcare, a National Action Plan to end violence against women, or fundamental EI and pension reform to benefit women. If you had used your government's mandate to implement such programs, you could have had long-standing impacts on women's safety and economic security.

As you have said yourself, violence against women remains a significant barrier to gender equality. But despite your stated commitment to create a strategy that "aligns your action" and that "complements and builds on the significant efforts underway in the provinces and territories", women are still waiting:

- Women fleeing violence in Canada do not have access to the same levels of services or protection across the country, as affirmed by a Women's Shelter Canada report this month;
- Women are turned away daily from domestic violence shelters, despite your mandate letter instructions from the Prime Minister to ensure "that no one fleeing domestic violence is left without a place to turn";
- Young women are being asked to wait five years for safety; your government has not implemented measures to combat campus sexual violence now;
- Feminist organizations are still challenged to keep the lights on and doors open due to a lack of federal core operations funding;
- [In her April report](#) on Canada, the UN Special Rapporteur on Violence Against Women called out your government for its failure to create a National Action Plan to end violence against women.



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The all-party Status of Women committee unanimously recommended that you, as Minister, “urge coordination of federal, provincial, and territorial government responses to help end violence against women and girls”, starting with Canada’s Federal-Provincial-Territorial Status of Women Forum. Will you do so, this week?

I also urge you to take the lead on what the Status of Women Committee heard consistently throughout its study on Women’s Economic Justice: we must act now to address the economic barriers holding Canadian women back.

New Democrats highlighted the federal legislative actions that are needed to advance economic justice for women in a letter to the Prime Minister a year ago, and a [report to Parliament](#) in June which includes:

- Creating a national, universal childcare system;
- Legislating and funding pay equity immediately;
- Legislating paid leave for individuals experiencing domestic violence;
- Increasing the federal minimum wage;
- Including drop-out provisions for childcare and eldercare in CPP; and
- Reforming EI to reflect precarious and low-wage work done disproportionately by women.

Canadian women need to see your actions match your words. Your government’s feminist pronouncements will have no impact on women’s lives unless you legislate solutions to the long-standing barriers women face in our economy. We urge you to immediately implement the NDP’s concrete measures to ensure that Canadian women do not fall further into precarious work and poverty.

I would like to hear back from you on how these priorities have been addressed in this week’s Federal-Provincial-Territorial meeting.

Thanks for your attention; I look forward to hearing from you.

Sheila Malcolmson, MP for Nanaimo—Ladysmith
NDP Critic for Women’s Equality

“Until all of us have made it, none of us have made it.” ~Rosemary Brown

Cc: Anne Minh-Thu Quach, MP for Salaberry – Suroît