



October 13, 2021

Dear Premier Ford and all Ontario political parties,

We made it through the most trying days of the pandemic thanks to the work of women, both paid and unpaid.

We *continue* to rely on women to keep it together for our kids, for our workplaces, for our isolated neighbours and aging parents as this pandemic wears on. Many have buckled under the weight of it all.

We have heard from all levels of government that this pandemic has brought on a she-cession. It is the first time a global economic crisis has disproportionately impacted women, particularly those who are Black, Indigenous, racialized, LGBTQ2S+, newcomers and those living with disabilities.

We saw employment figures for men quickly rebound, while women's workforce participation is only slowly recovering after dropping to levels not seen in 30 years.

We have been waiting to hear tangible solutions for tackling the she-cession. The Ontario speech from the throne earlier this month made no mention of it and there has been no targeted strategy to address this large part of the labour force.

This economic crisis requires transformative intervention. Task forces and tax credits are not enough. Ontario needs a plan to end this she-cession once and for all.

In June 2022 -- only eight months away -- Ontarians will go to the polls to elect a new government. We want to start this conversation now to ensure that each and every candidate in this upcoming election is focused on creating a feminist recovery.

As community organizations and advocates from across the province, we are speaking up to demand a concrete plan. This plan must include:

- Investment in long-term, sustainable, gender-focused upskilling and training to help women access well-paying jobs;
- Signing on to the federal child care plan to create a public and non-profit-led, universal, high-quality, affordable child care system; and,
- Enactment of standards for decent work conditions to improve labour and employment standards in feminized industries.

We will be watching each party's platform and reporting back to our communities in the run-up to the 2022 provincial election. We will not let these pressing issues fade into the background.

Now is the time to make a difference. This pandemic is not over – and neither is the she-cession. We need a plan to end it and we need it now.

Signed,

YWCA Toronto

YWCA Cambridge

YWCA Hamilton

YWCA Sudbury

Community YWCA of Muskoka

YWCA Kitchener Waterloo

YWCA St. Thomas-Elgin

YWCA Niagara Region

YWCA Canada

Atkinson Foundation

Ontario Coalition for Better Child Care

Open Policy

Inner City Health Associates

Women's Health in Women's Hands CHC

North York Women's Centre (NYWC)

Embrace Agency to End Violence (Formerly Interim Place)

Ontario Nonprofit Network

Jay Pitter Placemaking Inc.

Workers' Action Centre

Association of Early Childhood Educators Ontario

Woman Abuse Council of Toronto (WomanACT)

CivicAction

The Neighbourhood Group Community Services

Barbra Schlifer Commemorative Clinic

Toronto Rape Crisis Centre Multicultural Women Against Rape

FCJ Refugee Centre

Toronto City Councillor Kristyn Wong-Tam

Daily Bread Food Bank

Income Security Advocacy Centre (ISAC)

Rexdale Women's Centre

Black Health Alliance

City for All Women Initiative (CAWI)

Social Planning Toronto