



Ms. Judy Sgro
Chair of the Standing Committee on the Status of Women
Room 815, Confederation Building
House of Commons
Ottawa, Ontario
K1A 0A6

Dear Ms. Sgro:

Pursuant to Standing Order 109 of the House of Commons, we are pleased, on behalf of the Government of Canada, to respond to the Standing Committee's Fourth Report tabled in the House of Commons on May 19, 2006.

We are pleased to inform the Standing Committee of the initiatives that this Government will put in place to address the issue of pay equity in the federal jurisdiction. As the members of the Committee are aware, there is pay equity legislation regulating both the federal public and private sectors already in place. It is our intention to strengthen support to workplace partners to help them meet their obligations under the current pay equity regime. Our approach will have three components:

- Increased education;
- Specialized mediation assistance;
- Compliance monitoring.

In particular, information packages that clearly outline the rights and obligations of federally-regulated employers, employees and unions will be disseminated to our stakeholders. We will also make specialized mediation services available to workplace partners in order to provide them with critical assistance in their efforts at negotiating pay equity solutions. A key component of these measures will be the rigorous monitoring of the progress made by employers to eliminate any form of gender discrimination in their compensation practices. To this end, our Labour inspectors will be directed to actively examine federally-regulated private sector employers' wage records, and to provide information and guidance where necessary. These inspectors will also notify the Canadian Human Rights Commission if they have reasonable grounds to believe that an employer is engaging in discriminatory practices and is not willing to take any remedial action.

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The successful implementation of any workplace initiative depends upon support of the workplace partners as they must work together to achieve the desired objective. In order to ensure the effectiveness of these measures, it is our intention to consult our key stakeholders to obtain their views on how to improve the measures that are being put in place to achieve positive pay equity results. To this end, we would like to assure the Committee members that the Canadian Human Rights Commission will be involved in our efforts to deliver on these commitments.

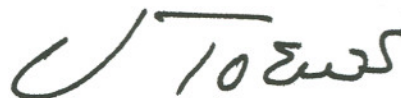
As members of the Committee are aware, the Task Force on Pay Equity was appointed by the previous Government in 2001 to conduct an in-depth review of the equal pay provisions of the *Canadian Human Rights Act* (section 11) and the *Equal Wages Guidelines, 1986*. The Task Force submitted a comprehensive report in 2004 which contains 113 recommendations. After careful review and assessment of the Task Force Report, it has become apparent to us that there is no consensus among stakeholders on the implementation of many of its recommendations. In our view, the measures that we are putting in place will lead to more immediate and positive results for working women in federal jurisdiction.

We thank the Standing Committee for their continued interest as we work towards ensuring a fair and equitable workplace for all Canadians governed by the federal legislative regime.

Sincerely,



Jean-Pierre Blackburn, P.C., M.P.
Minister of Labour and Minister of the
Economic Development Agency of
Canada for the Regions of Quebec



Vic Toews, P.C., M.P.
Minister of Justice and
Attorney General of Canada