

Dear participants

I commend you on your commitment to women in the Greater Moncton area and across Canada, in the longstanding fight to achieve pay equity.

In fact, my party, the Liberal Party has had a longstanding commitment to women and ensuring that they have the rightful place as strong and vibrant contributors to building a better Canada. We have demonstrated this commitment through the establishment of Standing Committee on the Status of Women, the extension of parental benefits to one year, and the creation of an Expert Panel to advance gender-based analysis and gender equality issues. These kinds of mechanisms have been put into place not only to benefit women, but ALL Canadians.

I want you to know that I understand the concerns you have expressed regarding the pay equity provisions of the current budget implementation bill, Bill C-10.

My fellow party members and I have asked the Finance Minister Jim Flaherty at the Finance Committee if he would be willing to make changes to the Bill. He responded that the Government considers the Bill a confidence measure. This makes it a clear choice of passing the budget and getting the multi-billion stimulus plan moving, or causing an election by altering or defeating C-10. An election would, unfortunately, delay any help to Canadians and for the economy by many months.

Please understand that I am not in support of the changes to pay equity. However, since the fall, we Liberals have been clear that protecting Canadian jobs is the Liberal Party's number one priority at this time of economic uncertainty. In January, a Canadian lost his or her job about every 20 seconds of every day. We feel that the stimulus package contained in this budget is the best hope for stemming this tide of job losses as quickly as possible.

While the Bill contains a few items which we would prefer not to pass, we feel that if our top priority is helping Canadian families keep or find new jobs, then the proper course of action is to pass C-10.

Again, I commend you on your efforts and encourage you to seek out the Conservative government's elected officials in our region to ask them why and how they can put forward such legislative provisions.

Brian Murphy  
M.P. for Moncton- Riverview-Dieppe