



**Tom
Mulcair**

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NDP  NDP

October 7, 2015

Mary Scott and Nadia Kidwai
Co-Chairs
Institute for International Women's Rights Manitoba
P.O. Box 273, 971 Corydon Avenue
Winnipeg, MB R3M 0Y0

Dear Ms. Scott and Ms. Kidwai,

Thank you for your letter and the important concerns that you raised.

As you have rightly noted, the Conservatives have used CRA audits as a political tool to punish charities that dare to pursue interests outside of the Conservative agenda. They dedicated more than \$13 million to going after environmentalists, anti-poverty activists, humanitarian workers, and bird watchers. The NDP will put an end to this political chill and ensure that charitable status, audits, and other policy measures are not used in a punitive and partisan way to silence legitimate groups whose views differ from the government.

We also recognize that as a country, we still have a long way to go towards achieving women's equality. In the last parliament, only 25% of our elected federal representatives were women – and that was a historic high. According to the Gender Gap Report compiled by the World Economic Forum, Canada ranks 19th in the world in terms of gender parity – but 27th on equal pay for equal work. On average, women still make only 74% of the wages men make. And far too many women are victims of sexual or physical violence. In 2014, there were more than 60,000 admissions – not including children – at shelters for abused women across Canada.

Unfortunately, the Conservatives have refused to engage on these issues and have acted to make things worse. The Conservatives gutted Status of Women Canada, removing equality from the mandate and cutting funding for research and advocacy. They undermined pay equity for federal public servants and contractors and one Conservative MP blamed women themselves for the pay gap. Shamefully,

the Conservatives refused to call an inquiry into high levels of violence against Indigenous women. And, they introduced regressive policies such as income splitting, which reward families with only one income earner.

The NDP has a concrete plan to tackle the issues that matter most to women and to advance women's equality.

One of the most critical priorities is to tackle the exorbitant cost of childcare. Too many women are paying more for their childcare than for their mortgage, while other women are prevented from joining the labour force because of the cost of childcare. The NDP's childcare plan will create or maintain one million childcare spaces at a cost of no more than \$15 a day. This will help families to pay for childcare fees without breaking the bank.

We will also expand parental leave by introducing five weeks of dedicated leave for the second parent and by doubling the amount of leave available to parents of multiples.

With regard to economic security and employment equity, the NDP will restore the federal minimum wage and progressively raise it to \$15 an hour, helping to ensure that more workers receive a living wage. As many minimum wage workers are women, this policy primarily benefits women. We will also introduce proactive pay equity legislation, requiring employers in federal jurisdiction to develop pay equity compliance plans. And, an NDP government will implement the outstanding recommendations of the Task Force on Pay Equity.

In contrast to the Conservatives' shameful refusal to take action on the disproportionate violence experienced by an indigenous women and girls, an NDP government will call an inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women within the first 100 days in office. The NDP will also introduce a comprehensive national action plan to end violence against all women and girls, with dedicated funding and benchmarks. This will be developed in cooperation with women's groups and Indigenous

organizations. Finally, the NDP will restore the Shelter Enhancement Program that was cut by the Conservatives, to build and expand shelters so that no woman in need is ever turned away.

The NDP has set a record in the past for the proportion of women in our caucus. In this election, we are on track to set a new record—43% of our candidates are women. Led by our strong caucus, we will ensure that all legislation put before Parliament is analyzed through a gender lens. We will also lead by example, we'll ensure that half of all appointees to government boards and Crown Corporations are women.

Thank you again for writing and sharing your concerns with me.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Tom Mulcair". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Tom Mulcair
Leader, New Democratic Party of Canada