



## WOMEN'S RIGHTS ARE NOT NEGOTIABLE DEFEND PAY EQUITY – FIGHT BILL C-10!

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### Fact Sheet

## The Harper government's “pay equity” bill threatens women's rights

The Public Service Alliance of Canada is calling on opposition members to remove legislation from the budget bill that would prevent women in the federal public sector from receiving equal pay for work of equal value.

The *Public Sector Equitable Compensation Act* will effectively eliminate women's ability to pursue pay equity complaints by forcing them to file complaints as individuals. With the resources of their employer – the government – arrayed against them, women will have to fight their way through a one-sided contest that would clearly be a mockery of justice.

The “pay equity” bill is part of the *Budget Implementation Act* (Bill C-10), which was tabled on February 6, 2009. PSAC refutes the notion that this legislation is “proactive,” given that it ignores the recommendations made in the well-respected 2004 report from the federal Task Force on Pay Equity. The union contends that the new scheme would make the current system much worse, removing pay equity's status as a human right and opening it up to market forces.

### According to PSAC, the *Public Sector Equitable Compensation Act* undermines pay equity in the following ways:

- It transforms pay equity into an “equitable compensation issue” that must be discussed at the bargaining table – even though fundamental human rights should never be negotiable.
- It makes it more difficult to claim pay equity, by changing the definition of a “female predominant” job group to require that women make up 70 per cent of workers in the group.
- It redefines the criteria used to evaluate whether jobs are of “equal” value, leaving pay equity up to the fluctuations of the market and simply reinforcing systemic discrimination.
- It forces individual women to make pay equity claims without any support – in fact it would impose a \$50,000 fine on any union for encouraging or assisting their own members in filing a pay equity complaint.

Pay equity is a fundamental human right that must not be taken away at a bargaining table where the federal government historically holds the balance of power. The Harper government has already demonstrated its commitment to legislating wage increases and undermining collective agreements. Now, women's rights will be on the chopping block.

The *Public Sector Equitable Compensation Act* is a regressive piece of legislation that will make it more difficult to close the income gap between women and men in the federal public sector. And it does nothing to help people who work for Crown corporations or in other federally-regulated workplaces.

### PSAC demands that Parliament:

- Remove the *Public Sector Equitable Compensation Act* from Bill C-10.
- Implement the recommendations of the 2004 Task Force on Pay Equity and bring forward pay equity legislation that is truly proactive.

