

City Council

Notice of Motion

MM44.14	ACTION			Ward:All
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Creating an Intersectional Gender Equity Strategy and Gender Equality Office for Toronto - by Councillor Kristyn Wong-Tam, seconded by Councillor Gord Perks

** Notice of this Motion has been given.*

** This Motion is subject to referral to the Executive Committee. A two-thirds vote is required to waive referral.*

Recommendations

Councillor Kristyn Wong-Tam, seconded by Councillor Gord Perks, recommends that:

1. City Council direct the City Manager to develop a framework for a Gender Equity Strategy and Gender Equality Office for the City of Toronto and to report back to the Executive Committee in the first quarter of 2019, on a framework that will include:
 - a. established targets and strategies for addressing intersectional gender equity in key areas such as housing, shelter, governance, transit planning, recreation, urban planning, youth, violence against women, affordable child care and budgeting;
 - b. establishing an ongoing advisory committee to inform the development of the strategy as well as the development and review of existing and new City policies and programs;
 - c. an implementation plan and annual reporting for intersectional Gender-Responsive Budgeting;
 - d. a feasibility analysis of establishing a fully resourced and staffed Gender Equity Office; and
 - e. the collection of disaggregated data.

Summary

Women, girls, trans and non-binary individuals make up more than 52 percent of Toronto's population. They are as diverse as the City is in terms of their ethnicity, age, religion, immigration status, ability, sexual orientation and identity, and income. Yet, they face disproportionately higher rates of violence; greater poverty including more precarious employment; lower wages; sexual exploitation including criminalization of sex work, forced

sterilization, and systematic reproductive health injustice; religious persecution based on attire, and are not represented in senior management and governance positions.

In Toronto, the average woman's income is below average in 311 census tracts, which constitutes more than 57 percent of the City. Moreover, Toronto is Canada's Child Poverty Capital with over 25 percent of children living in poverty. This rate is even higher for racialized and Indigenous families. Eighty-four (84) percent of single-parent families are led by women and are up to three times as likely to live in poverty as two-parent families. Women still have the majority responsibility for the unpaid workload of child care, elder care, and household work resulting in the burden of child poverty falling on women's shoulders. With Toronto having the most expensive child care in Canada, this means that women are being left out of the workforce because they simply cannot afford child care, further impacting their levels of poverty and economic disadvantage.

Violent crime across Toronto has decreased in the past 10 years, with the exception of sexual assault, which has shown no decrease. Women and trans people continue to face high incidents of domestic violence and each year more women are murdered by their intimate partners and ex-partners. Rates of violence for Indigenous and women with disabilities are significantly higher.

Women and girls are the majority users of our public transit system, yet on a daily basis, they must face violence, sexual assault, sexual harassment, anti-Black racism, anti-Semitism and Islamophobia while riding to home, school and work.

Toronto's women's shelters are consistently at or above 99 percent capacity, despite the City's occupancy standard being set at a 90 percent threshold. Violence Against Women's shelters are consistently full, as they are unable to place women into permanent affordable housing.

Toronto's leadership is also lagging behind in gender equity. Toronto City Council has less than 30 percent of women Councillors, and only one of them is racialized and an open member of the LGBTQ2S community. Toronto's corporate sector has only 20 percent of its senior leadership positions held by women, and an even smaller number are racialized women.

The City of Toronto is developing a number of equity strategies and plans that propose to create a more inclusive and equitable city for all residents. However, lacking within these strategies is a comprehensive and intersectional gender analysis which centres the gender experience to truly address the realities of women, girls, trans and non-binary residents, and sets targets to eliminate the disparities in women's experiences. Further, there is a lack of full recognition that these statistics worsen for Indigenous, Black, LGBT, racialized, and disabled women. Recently, large cities across Canada have announced gender equity strategies, but to date, Toronto has not developed any gender-specific equity strategy. The City of Vancouver recently released a 10 year Women's Equity Strategy. Ottawa City Council recently voted unanimously to explore the creation of a Women's Bureau. The City of Edmonton has created a Women's Initiative that fosters and promotes equality, opportunity, access to services, justice and inclusion for women in Edmonton.

Toronto has long been a leader in advancing equity and inclusion for its residents, but when it comes to gender justice, it lags far behind other Canadian cities. It is time for Toronto to become a leader in ensuring that the voices and experiences of women and girls are recognized in the City's decision-making. Policies, programmes and spending that are focused on

equitable outcomes for women and non-binary individuals, ultimately serve all genders. It is time for Toronto to establish a gender intersectional equity strategy and plan, and fund it accordingly. We can no longer allow women to fall behind.

Background Information (City Council)

Member Motion MM44.14