

MANDATE LETTERS



As Canada forms its next government, the Prime Minister's Office will be preparing ministerial mandate letters. In this special Intelligence Memo series, policy experts highlight key challenges and priorities in each minister's portfolio.

From: Tammy Schirle
To: The Incoming Minister of Women and Gender Equality (formerly Status of Women Canada.)
Date: October 22, 2019

As minister, your overarching goal will be to advance gender equality in Canada's economic, social, and political life.

You are responsible for taking a leadership role in the government-wide implementation of [Gender-based Analysis Plus](#), an analytical process used to assess how diverse groups of women, men and non-binary people may experience policies, programs and initiatives.

As such, you are expected to work with your colleagues in all ministries, as well as with officials and counterparts at the provincial and municipal levels, to work on a wide range of policy issues and priorities.

As you embark on the start of your term, your top priorities should include the following:

- Continue to lead Canada's efforts to mainstream gender equality and Gender-based Analysis Plus in the decision-making process of government, in Canada and abroad.
- Continue investments in the collection and tracking of gender and diversity data, particularly with respect to indicators used in [the Gender Diversity Framework](#). Furthermore, you will identify areas in which further investments are needed to improve the government's research capacity.
- Support the Minister of Employment, Workplace Development and Labour and the Pay Equity Commissioner in the administration and enforcement of the *Pay Equity Act*, including the development of the regulations required to bring it into force.
- Work with the Minister of Finance and the Minister of Families, Children and Social Development to improve the support provided by our Employment Insurance system, especially provisions for maternity and parental leaves, to better support the needs of all workers given their roles in the family and today's labour market.
- Work with the Minister of Finance to review provisions of the *Income Tax Act*, ensuring measures are designed to support the labour force attachment of women. In particular, this requires careful consideration of provisions whereby eligibility depends on family income and may create [high marginal tax rates](#) that discourage labour force attachment for secondary earners in a family.
- Work with the Minister of Families, Children and Social Development, the Minister of Seniors, the Minister of Finance, and the Ministers' provincial and territorial counterparts to ensure the design of our retirement income system remains relevant and effective for generations to come. A review of the existing retirement income system will be mindful of its history: its foundations were designed at a time when women's and men's roles in their families and their career plans were substantially different than today. This requires a careful review of provisions for Registered Pension Plans, the Canada Pension Plan, Old Age Security and the Guaranteed Income Supplement, and related income tax provisions.
- Work with the Minister of Justice and the Minister of Indigenous and Northern Affairs to review the calls for justice put forward by the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls.
- Work with the RCMP and other police services across Canada to ensure consistent reporting of gender and other relevant characteristics in crime reporting. Consistent information is vital to inform policy development aiming to end gender-based violence and ensure access to justice.

Tammy Schirle is Professor of Economics at Wilfrid Laurier University, and is a C.D. Howe Institute Research Fellow.

To send a comment or leave feedback, email us at blog@cdhowe.org.

The views expressed here are those of the author. The C.D. Howe Institute does not take corporate positions on policy matters.