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Archived - 2014 Mandate letter: Women's Directorate

Premier's instructions to the Minister on priorities for the year 2014



September 25, 2014

The Honourable Tracy MacCharles
Minister Responsible for Women's Issues
14th Floor, 56 Wellesley Street West
Toronto, Ontario
M5S 2S3

Dear Minister MacCharles:

I am honoured to welcome you to your role as Minister Responsible for Women's Issues. We have a strong Cabinet in place, and I am confident that together we will build Ontario up, create new opportunities and champion a secure future for people across our province. The people of Ontario have entrusted their government to be a force for good, and we will reward that trust by working every day in the best interests of every person in this province.

As we implement a balanced and comprehensive plan for Ontario, we will lead from the activist centre. We will place emphasis on partnerships with businesses, communities and people to help foster continued economic growth and make a positive impact on the lives of every Ontarian. This collaborative approach will shape all the work we do. It will ensure we engage people on the issues that matter the most to them, and that we implement meaningful solutions to our shared challenges.

Our government's most recent Speech from the Throne outlined a number of key priorities that will guide your work as minister. Growing the economy and helping to create good jobs are fundamental to building more opportunity and security, now and in the future. That critical priority is supported by strategic investments in the talent and skills of our people, from childhood to retirement. It is supported through the building of modern infrastructure, transit and a seamless transportation network. It is supported by a dynamic business climate that thrives on innovation, creativity and partnerships to foster greater prosperity. And it is reflected across all of our government, in every area, and will extensively inform our programs and policies.

As we move forward with our plan to grow the economy and create jobs, we will do so through the lens of fiscal prudence. Our 2014 Budget reinforces our commitment to balancing the budget by 2017-18; it is essential that every area adheres to the program-spending objectives established in it. We will choose to invest wisely in initiatives that strengthen Ontario's competitive advantage, create jobs and provide vital public services to our families. The President of the Treasury Board, collaborating with the Minister of Finance, will work closely with you and your fellow Cabinet members to ensure that our government meets its fiscal targets. The President of the Treasury Board will also lead the government's efforts on accountability, openness and modernization as we implement new accountability measures across government.

As Minister Responsible for Women's Issues, you will play a key role in ensuring that every person who identifies as a woman or girl is able to participate as a full member of our society, exercise their rights — and enjoy their fundamental freedoms in the social, economic and civil life of our province.

Your priority will be to promote gender equality in Ontario, reflecting the diversity of our communities by taking a comprehensive approach to addressing the social and economic conditions that create inequalities.

Your specific priorities include:

Working to End Violence Against Women

- Continuing the important work of leading our government's efforts to prevent gender-based violence, with the goal of an Ontario where all women live free from the threat, fear or experience of violence.
- Continuing to address the particularly devastating consequences of violence for Aboriginal women, their families and communities. You will continue to support the National Aboriginal Organizations' call to the federal government to hold a national public inquiry on missing and murdered Aboriginal women.

Working to Improve Women's Economic Independence and Security

- Ensuring that women enjoy economic opportunities equal to those of their fellow Ontarians and continue to play an important role in a healthy economy.
- Continuing our government's efforts to reduce poverty, enhance child care, improve job and skills training, increase the minimum wage and support entrepreneurship for women.
- Continuing our government's commitment to broaden gender diversity on the boards and in the senior management of organizations in the private and public sectors. You will also continue to identify ways to increase the representation of women in leadership positions.
- Continuing to deliver training and skills development programs for low-income and at-risk women — and services offered through community-based women's centres.

Collaborating on Shared Responsibilities across Government

- Collaborating with colleagues across government to ensure that a gender lens is brought to government strategies, policies and programs.
- Working with the Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities to deliver on our government's commitment to support apprenticeships by introducing targeted strategies — and delivering employment,

education and training programs for women and other key groups. This includes applying a gender lens to the integration of government-funded employment and training programs and services.

- Collaborating with the Minister of Aboriginal Affairs to support the Joint Working Group on Violence Against Aboriginal Women — and continue to respond to the high rates of violence against Aboriginal women and girls.
- Continuing efforts to close the wage gap between men and women, which will strengthen our economy. Women make up an integral part of our economy and society, but on average still do not earn as much as men. You will support the Minister of Labour in the development of a wage gap strategy that will ensure Ontario continues to close the wage gap in the context of the 21st century economy.

We have an ambitious agenda for the next four years. I know that, by working together in partnership, we can be successful. The above list of priority initiatives is not meant to be exhaustive, as there are many other responsibilities that you and your ministry will need to carry out. To that end, this mandate letter is to be used by your ministry to develop more detailed plans for implementation of the initiatives above, in addition to other initiatives not highlighted in this letter.

I ask that you continue to build on the strong relationships we have with the Ontario Public Service, the broader public sector, other levels of government, and the private, non-profit and voluntary sectors. We want to be the most open and transparent government in the country. We want to be a government that works for the people of this province — and with them. It is of the utmost importance that we lead responsibly, act with integrity, manage spending wisely and are accountable for every action we take.

I look forward to working together with you in building opportunity today, and securing the future for all Ontarians.

Sincerely,



Kathleen Wynne
Premier

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