

# Unions Are a Girl's Best Friend

Unions make a huge difference for working women



## UNIONS PROMOTE EQUALITY: On the Job

- ♀ Better wages
- ♀ Better benefits such as health plans, overtime pay and paid leaves
- ♀ Protection from discrimination and harassment
- ♀ Job training and skills development (which also means even higher wages)
- ♀ Job security
- ♀ A formal employment contract which is enforced by the union
- ♀ Equalization of the wages of male and female-dominated jobs
- ♀ Better maternity/parental leave benefits
- ♀ Flexible work schedules and family care leave

## UNIONS PROMOTE EQUALITY: In Society

Unions organize and lobby for legislative changes to improve the lives of working people. Over the years, unions in Canada have worked hard to change laws to protect workers and promote equality for all workers. Unions advocate for:

- ♀ Strong human rights laws
- ♀ Public health care and pharmacare
- ♀ Pay and employment equity laws
- ♀ Better pension legislation
- ♀ Improvements to Employment Insurance
- ♀ Recognition of foreign workers' credentials
- ♀ Publicly-funded, not-for-profit, accessible, quality child care
- ♀ Funding for women's advocacy and research organizations
- ♀ Higher minimum wages
- ♀ Improved employment standards protection

Most importantly, the gap in pay between men and women is **SIGNIFICANTLY SMALLER** resulting in a greater economic equality.



Equality  
once and for all!



Canadian Labour Congress  
Congrès du travail du Canada

## Women know a good thing when they see it!

In 2006, unionized women earned an average of \$21.86 an hour or 93% of the wage of unionized men. Non-union women earned an average of \$16.15 an hour, or 75.4% of the wage of non-union men. Economic research indicates that the union wage advantage ranges between 7% - 14%. More and more women understand that unions raise their wages and work to narrow the gender wage gap.

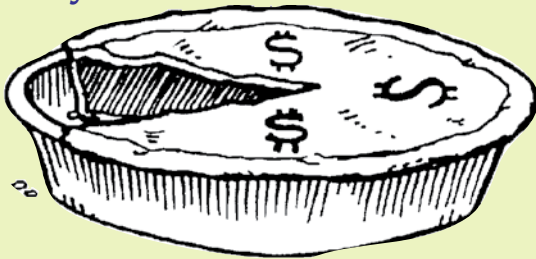
In fact, women now make up half the membership of unions in Canada. For the first time, the rate of unionization of women is the same as that of men - actually, it's slightly higher (31.7% of working women are union members compared to 31.6% of men).

## Low-paid women: High profit companies

Every year, banks and big box stores declare massive profits, yet the women who work there can barely get by on the wages they pay. Why? Because these workers don't have anyone on their side. These corporations are largely not unionized. Only 14% of women in the private sector are in a union, compared to 23% of men.

If there was a union in these businesses, women could be making at least \$5 an hour more. That translates into **\$10,400 a year more!**

### What could you spend an extra \$10,000 a year on?



shoes for the kids; child care; eye glasses; winter clothes; summer camp; a better apartment; books; toys; food; swimming lessons; a new couch...

## What you can do

*Find out more about unions.*

- ♀ If you are looking for better pay and benefits and looking to close the wage gap - find out about joining a union, particularly if you work in the private sector.
- ♀ Support the labour movement's campaigns to improve labour laws to make joining a union easier. It's a question of equality.
- ♀ Support campaigns to strengthen human rights, pay and employment equity laws.
- ♀ Photocopy this fact sheet and leave it at the bank, or in a shopping cart at big-box stores. (Don't worry - you don't have to shop there.)
- ♀ Think twice about supporting a business that pays their women employees or any employees low wages.

Join this campaign, find more information on unions and other equality issues on our web site at:

[www.onceandforall.ca](http://www.onceandforall.ca)

**Check it out!**