



April 19, 2018

MPP Peter Tabuns (Toronto Danforth)  
Chair, Standing Committee on Social Policy  
Room 165, Main Legislative Building, Queen's Park  
Toronto, Ontario  
M7A 1A5

Dear Mr. Tabuns,

On behalf of the Ontario Society of Professional Engineers (OSPE), we would like to thank the Standing Committee on Social Policy for inviting us to deliver formal remarks on April 17, 2018 in support of *Bill 3, Pay Transparency Act, 2018*.

OSPE is the advocacy body for the 85,000 Professional Engineers and 250,000 engineering graduates in Ontario. We are deeply committed to supporting the creation of an equitable and inclusive profession that is reflective of the province's rich diversity.

However, despite our commitment, and that of many other stakeholders, women remain underrepresented in the engineering profession. In 2015, women comprised just 20% of undergraduates enrolled in engineering programs across Ontario. In that same year, women accounted for only 14% of P.Engs. – or Professional Engineers licensed by Professional Engineers Ontario.

Recognizing that a bold initiative was needed to reach gender parity, in 2015 Engineers Canada – the national organization comprised of the 12 engineering regulators that license Canada's 290,000 engineers – launched their 30 by 30 campaign. This campaign aims to increase the percentage of newly licensed engineers who are women to 30% by the year 2030. The figure currently sits at 17% nationally. OSPE is proud to be one of the Ontario Champion for this important initiative.

The retention of women in engineering is an issue of great concern to OSPE – and we know that the gender wage gap is a significant part of the issue. If the profession is to increase the number of women engineers, the wage gap must be addressed.

OSPE's Women in Engineering Advocacy Champions Task Force (WE ACT) has been actively engaged in this topic, submitting recommendations to both the Gender Wage Gap Steering Committee and Women's Economic Empowerment Strategy. We also dedicated our 2017 Fall Forum, in part, to this specific issue. Ontario's Pay Equity Commissioner and a representative from Mercer Canada delivered a presentation on the gender wage gap in Ontario and the gender wage gap in engineering respectively to over 170 attendees.

This past fall, OSPE developed a survey for its "Let's Break Barriers" project, funded by Status of Women Canada. The project aims to identify the systemic barriers that contribute to the underrepresentation of women in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM). The survey garnered over 3,000 responses from women and men in STEM programs and careers across Canada.

When asked what challenges they encountered in their engineering careers, the top three answers we received from female respondents were:

1. Feeling disrespected and undervalued in the workplace;
2. A lack of mentors and role models; and
3. Feeling that they were paid less than male colleagues.

Below are comments OSPE received from a selection of women who participated in our “Let’s Break Barriers” survey:

*“I have had conversations on this with several of my engineering friends who are woman in two provinces and the pay issue seems to be a very common complaint, especially when you know for a fact that someone less qualified with less experience is being paid more...”*

*“I left engineering consulting and moved to municipal government to have more equal salary and more reasonable work hours...”*

*“On numerous occasions throughout the years, I have asked for pay increases backed with measurable data, to no avail.”*

In another survey OSPE conducted in partnership with Western University in 2016, 81% of female respondents believed that men in engineering made more money than women, even when completing similar work. We know these perceptions are not unfounded – they are real.

In partnership with Mercer, OSPE conducts an annual compensation survey of engineering companies across Canada. The OSPE Mercer National Compensation Survey is available to all OSPE members at no cost. This survey is a valuable resource and tool that empowers our members – recent graduates, Professional Engineers, and seasoned professionals, especially women – with the salary information they need to effectively advocate for themselves during a salary negotiation with a current or prospective employer.

OSPE has been using this survey to measure and monitor the engineering gender wage gap over the past four years. Analysis of 2016 compensation data revealed the following:

- For women with one to eight years of engineering experience, the wage gap was up to 5% (or \$4,598); and
- The largest discrepancies were evident in the most *senior* levels of engineering responsibility, ranging from 7% to 10% (\$9,223 or \$15,550).

Furthermore, OSPE’s 2015 report entitled *Crisis in Ontario’s Engineering Labour Market* also examined the engineering gender wage gap using data from the 2011 National Household Survey. This report found that women uniformly earned *less* than men in the same job categories. More specifically:

- For civil, mechanical, electrical, and chemical engineers, women earned 16% less than their male counterparts (\$66,703 versus \$79,540);
- For other types of engineers, earnings were 15% lower (\$67,284 versus \$79,540); and
- For engineering managers, 17% lower (\$98,009 versus \$117,489).

We know that there are also financial consequences associated with the gender wage gap – and that they are real. The gap can lead to a significant amount of “lost” compensation over the course of a woman’s career.

In addition, women in engineering who are paid less than men for completing similar work often feel undervalued, discouraged, and resentful – while others may choose to leave the profession altogether.

When women in OSPE’s “Let’s Break Barriers” survey were asked what kinds of workplace policy changes were needed to address the gender wage gap, their responses were clear. The following comment from a woman in STEM summarizes the feedback we received:

*“The only thing that would help is [the] publication of salary surveys, or publicly displayed salaries.*

*Women do not ask for higher salaries as often as men... I think they don't have the same confidence, or maybe they don't know what they're worth. But if they had more education on what people exactly like them were earning, they may be more willing [to ask for more money]...”*

OSPE strongly supports this proposed piece of legislation. It is a step in the right direction. When employers are required to disclose the expected compensation or salary range for a job, women will be empowered. They will also be more likely to advocate for themselves by negotiating their salary, thereby helping to close the gender wage gap.

Ensuring that women in engineering are fairly compensated for their work will also address the retention of women in the profession – which benefits the profession and the economy as a whole.

In closing, we would like to leave the Standing Committee with the following comments for their consideration:

- If passed, Bill 3 would first apply to Ontario Public Service employees. However, as unionized employees, pay structures for public sector employees are already transparent for varying employee group classifications.
- Small and medium-sized enterprises account for 95% of employers in Ontario. However, if passed, Bill 3 would only apply to large employers.

- How will this legislation protect all women, including those working in small companies?
- Section 6 requires employers to submit a pay transparency report that may be posted online or in the workplace.
  - Will this negatively impact women working in male dominated fields, like engineering? Will their private (salary) information be compromised?
- Section 12 explains that if a compliance officer finds a person has contravened a provision of this Act or the regulations, they may issue a penalty.
  - How much will the penalty be? For large companies, a small fine may be a mere slap on the wrist.

Again, thank you for inviting OSPE to participate in this important discussion around pay transparency and closing the gender wage gap in Ontario. For questions or comments regarding this submission, please contact Catrina Kronfli, Lead, Policy and Government Relations, at [ckronfli@ospe.on.ca](mailto:ckronfli@ospe.on.ca) or (416) 223-9961 ext. 243.

Sincerely,



Shelly Deitner, P.Eng.  
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Ontario Society of Professional Engineers



Sandro Perruzza  
Chief Executive Officer  
Ontario Society of Professional Engineers

CC: The Honourable Kevin Flynn (Oakville)  
The Honourable Harinder Malhi (Brampton-Springdale)  
The Honourable Kathleen Wynne, Premier of Ontario  
MPP Lorne Coe (Whitby – Oshawa)  
MPP Mike Colle (Eglinton – Lawrence)  
MPP Vic Dhillon (Brampton West)  
MPP John Fraser (Ottawa South)  
MPP Ann Hoggarth (Barrie)  
MPP Gila Martow (Thornhill)  
MPP Ted McMeekin (Ancaster – Dundas – Flamborough – Westdale)  
MPP Monique Taylor (Hamilton Mountain)

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### **About the Ontario Society of Professional Engineers (OSPE)**

The Ontario Society of Professional Engineers (OSPE) is the voice of the engineering community in Ontario. Ontario is home to over 80,000 professional engineers and over 250,000 engineering graduates who contribute to the most strategic sectors of Ontario's economy.

Engineers are trained, innovative problem solvers who develop solutions by considering costs and benefits, sustainability, public safety, and the complete lifecycle and integration of projects. Engineers are on the frontlines of developing, safeguarding, and maximizing Ontario's investments and are key stakeholders for all levels of government.

OSPE was formed in 2000 after members of Professional Engineers Ontario (PEO) voted to separate regulatory and advocacy functions into two distinct organizations

### **About the Women in Engineering Advocacy Champions Task Force (WE ACT)**

Since 2003, OSPE's Women in Engineering Advocacy Champions Task Force (WE ACT) has been encouraging women to study engineering, pursue a career in engineering, obtain their license, and seek leadership opportunities.