



October 21, 2016

MP Mark Gerretsen (Kingston and the Islands)
House of Commons
Ottawa, Ontario
K1A 0A6

Dear Minister Gerretsen,

On behalf of the Ontario Society of Professional Engineers' (OSPE) Women in Engineering Advocacy Committee (WEAC), we are pleased to submit this letter in support of *Bill C-243: The National Maternity Assistance Program*.

As many stakeholders have identified, women remain under-represented in the engineering profession. In fact, only 18% of graduates from engineering programs in Canada are female, only 10% of licence holders are female in Ontario, and only 22% of women with engineering degrees work as engineers or engineering managers in Ontario.

With a mandate to support the creation of a more progressive and diverse engineering profession, OSPE's Pilot Mentorship Program funded by the Status of Women Canada aims to support women seeking to obtain their P.Eng. designation. The program matches young women with a Professional Engineer who provides mentorship and advice for navigating the licensing process.

As the voice of the engineering profession in Ontario, OSPE believes more can and should be done to encourage young women to pursue careers in engineering, and help them navigate the profession. As OSPE outlined in its May 2016 Submission to the Premier's Highly Skilled Workforce Strategy Expert Panel, women leave the engineering profession for many reasons, including negative workplace culture and policies.

Bill C-243 proposes changes to the Employment Insurance Act that will provide pregnant women, including some engineers, with access to Employment Insurance seven weeks earlier if workplace conditions threaten the safety of the unborn child (or fetus). Not only does this amendment have the potential to help protect women, their unborn children, and their families in the short-term, it also has the potential to help maintain a diverse and inclusive engineering profession in the long-run.

For further information or to schedule a meeting, please contact Catrina Kronfli, Policy and Government Relations Lead, at ckronfli@opse.on.ca or (416) 223 -9961, ext. 243.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Shelly Deitner".

Shelly Deitner, P.Eng.
Director, Ontario Society of Professional Engineers (OSPE)
Chair, Women in Engineering Advocacy Committee (WEAC)

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Sandro Perruzza".

Sandro Perruzza
Chief Executive Officer, Ontario Society of Professional Engineers (OSPE)

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