



ASSOCIATION OF
ADMINISTRATIVE +
PROFESSIONAL
STAFF AT UBC

Submission by the

Association of Administrative and Professional Staff of
The University of British Columbia

to the

Legislative Assembly of British Columbia

regarding

Domestic and Sexual Violence Leave
October 8, 2019

The Association of Administrative and Professional Staff of The University of British Columbia is the professional association for nearly 5,000 professional staff at UBC. Our members play vital roles in every function of the University. Our members provide leadership and professional expertise within the University's academic faculties, on research initiatives, and as central service departments. They are located at UBC's two main campuses at Point Grey in Vancouver and the Okanagan Campus. They also work at hospitals and on research sites around the province.

We appreciate the opportunity to provide feedback to the Provincial Government regarding the issue of paid leave for domestic and sexual violence.

The Association of Administrative and Professional Staff of The University of British Columbia (AAPS) recommends that the Government of British Columbia amend the Employment Standards Act to:

- **Provide paid leave for survivors of domestic and sexual abuse**
- **Have 10 days of paid leave for survivors of domestic and sexual abuse**
- **Ensure privacy for survivors of domestic and sexual abuse in legislative language**

PAID LEAVE FOR DOMESTIC AND SEXUAL ABUSE

AAPS supports the Province providing all workers who are survivors of domestic and sexual abuse with paid leave. Work is an important part of all of our lives and identities. It is our role as a civic institution to ensure that workers can attend to important personal, health, and family matters without loss of dignity or wages. This is an essential part of our role as a progressive and inclusive society.

Province-wide paid leave is the first step to ensuring that the work environment has the appropriate supports for employees dealing with domestic abuse and sexual abuse. These traumatic life events have deep and lasting impacts on employees and their families. Having paid support from the workplace could go a long way to encourage employees to address these issues that are occurring in their lives and hopefully end cycles of family violence and personal trauma. One in three women will experience violence in their lifetime. The numbers around experiences of violence are disproportionately higher for women, and those who identify as disabled, indigenous, and transgender.¹ These are also communities who have a greater barrier to entry for consistent, higher-paying jobs. Indeed, the economic impact of spousal violence alone was 7.4 billion dollars in 2009.²

Domestic and sexual violence impacts the whole work environment. One's personal life cannot be compartmentalized from their work-life, particularly when workers are facing stress and trauma. 33% of

¹ Sexual Assault Centre Statistics. [SACHA -Resources-Statistics](#). Web Accessed (2019-09-09).

² Government of Canada. [Making the Links in Family Violence Cases: Collaboration among the Family, Child Protection and Criminal Justice Systems](#). Web Accessed (2019-09-09).

employees have reported experiencing domestic abuse, and 81.9% reported workplace performance issues as related to that abuse³.

It is a complex issue, and recovery is equally complex. However, employers need to be part of the ecosystem of support to help cope with and eventually end domestic and sexual violence. Employers need to be a part of a system that creates a foundation so that people can address issues, leave spouses or family members, and seek appropriate services that will lead to a healthier and more productive work environment. Paid leave will provide that first small step.

TEN DAYS PAID LEAVE

As a progressive province, B.C. should be at the forefront of this type of paid leave, not last to the table. We need to have language in place in the Employment Standards Act that supports ten days of protected paid leave, following the best practices of countries like New Zealand⁴. This kind of progressive paid leave signals that ending domestic and sexual violence is a priority for the Provincial Government and should be a priority for organizations and individuals as well. The loss to employers in 2009 was 77.9 million dollars, with a further loss of productivity of about 600 million dollars⁵.

The benefits of protecting survivors and ensuring they have time to address these difficult issues and protect their children far outweigh the costs. We have a responsibility to future generations to support individuals breaking prolonged abuse cycles. Along with the 10 days paid leave, there should also be provisions to fast-track accommodations for flexibility of the work arrangements. While primary victims of abuse bear the most direct economic impact, violence intrudes on many aspects of the workplace and can also impact co-workers and teams, creating long-term physical and mental health issues. Let's consider how to best serve survivors, their families, and their co-workers by creating a legislative change that will improve their lives and get them back to work in a healthy manner.

PRIVACY FOR SURVIVORS OF DOMESTIC AND SEXUAL ABUSE

Finally, we want to encourage legislators to follow best practices for ensuring that survivors who are using paid leave have appropriate protections and rights to privacy given the sensitive and grave matters they face. 33 out of 1,000 survivors do not report their abuse because of the lack of appropriate social systems.⁶ Given our diverse province, privacy measures will be critical. There are no easy solutions to addressing the impacts of domestic and sexual violence. Ensuring high levels of privacy on these matters

³ Wathen, C. N., MacGregor, J. C. D., MacQuarrie, B. J. with the Canadian Labour Congress. [Can Work be Safe, When Home Isn't? Initial Findings of a Pan-Canadian Survey on Domestic Violence and the Workplace](#). 2014. Web Accessed (2019-09-09).

⁴ Roy, Eleanor Ainge. ['A huge win': New Zealand brings in paid domestic violence leave](#). 2018-07-26. Web Accessed (2019-09-09).

⁵ Government of Canada. [Making the Links in Family Violence Cases: Collaboration among the Family, Child Protection and Criminal Justice Systems](#). Web Accessed (2019-09-09).

⁶ Sexual Assault Centre Statistics. SACHA. Web Accessed (2019-09-09).

will encourage more survivors to actively address the issues that they face leading, in turn, to positive impacts for their children, families, and co-workers. Let's create a policy that will be well utilized by those who need it and help stem the effects of long-terms cycles of family violence and sexual abuse.

CONCLUSION

Paid leave is an important next step for the Province of British Columbia to end domestic and sexual violence. Once the issue is brought to the forefront, systemic factors can start to be addressed. With this kind of leave in place, survivors can stay in the workforce while addressing the challenges of domestic and sexual abuse.

If the Province of British Columbia truly wants to work for all its workers, then it needs to provide legislative support for its most vulnerable workers. The Government should be a leader on how the British Columbians can attend to those important matters in work and family life, and those need to be legislated for everyone.

ABOUT THE ASSOCIATION OF ADMINISTRATIVE AND PROFESSIONAL STAFF OF THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

The Association of Administrative and Professional Staff of The University of British Columbia (AAPS) is the professional association for the Management and Professional Staff group at UBC. AAPS is the legal bargaining agent for the professional staff group and represents its nearly 5,000 members in collective bargaining and dispute resolution with the University. AAPS supports members in resolving workplace issues and strives to improve their work experience at UBC. The Association also creates a connected community of members through networking and professional development opportunities.

AAPS is registered under the B.C. Societies Act.



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