



Canadian Center for Women's Empowerment (CCFWE)

Ottawa, ON

<https://ccfwe.org/>

PRESS RELEASE

Calls for House of Commons To Declare November 26 as National Economic Abuse Awareness Day

[Ottawa, February 7, 2024] – This Friday, February 9, 2024, the federal government has the opportunity to help recognize the impact of Economic Abuse on countless victim-survivors.

MP Anita Vandenbeld (Ottawa West—Nepean, Ontario) will introduce the Canadian Center for Women's Empowerment's (CCFWE) petition e-4660, urging the Federal government to declare November 26 as National Economic Abuse Awareness Day. The petition closed for signatures on January 29, 2024.

Economic Abuse, a pervasive yet often overlooked form of gender-based violence, affects over 95% of survivors experiencing domestic violence. Economic Abuse undermines a victim's financial independence, leaving them socially isolated, indebted, and without financial resources. Economic Abuse amplifies structural barriers to economic equity for Black, racialized, Indigenous, gender-diverse, disabled, and other vulnerable communities further amplifying structural barriers to economic equity.

Tabled during Black History Month, the petition also acknowledges the disproportionate impacts Economic Abuse has on survivors from Black communities across Canada.

In its 2022 [report on addressing intimate partner and family violence](#), the federal Status of Women Committee recommended that the federal government “*develop a comprehensive strategy to address financial and economic abuse [...] reviewing existing legislative and policy structures available to support victims.*”

A National Economic Abuse Awareness Day will be an important element of the government's gender-based violence strategy to reduce societal stigmas surrounding finances and domestic violence and validate the experiences of victim-survivors.

“Raising awareness about Economic Abuse amid the current economic crisis is crucial to breaking down barriers for victims, enabling the development of women's economic security programs and policies so that women can heal, thrive, and feel economically safe and secure,” notes Meseret Haileyesus, Executive Director at CCFWE who initiated the petition.

CCFWE urges all Members of Parliament to support this non-partisan federal initiative, recognizing the significance of declaring November 26 as National Economic Abuse Awareness Day.

BACKGROUND

WHAT IS ECONOMIC ABUSE

Economic Abuse is a very prevalent but notoriously underestimated form of domestic violence that often has lasting adverse financial consequences for victim-survivors. In Canada, Economic Abuse is recognized as one form of gender-based violence in the National Action Plan (NAP) to end gender-based violence, while Financial Abuse is included in the “family violence” definition of Canada’s Divorce Act.

Economic Abuse incorporates a range of behaviours that allow a perpetrator to control someone else’s economic resources or freedoms. It refers to various tactics that limit an individual’s financial autonomy, including but not limited to denying them access to their money, exerting control over their resources, or leveraging intimidation and threats to constrain their economic freedom. [Learn more.](#)

ECONOMIC ABUSE PREVALENCE IN CANADA

While people from all socioeconomic statuses, backgrounds, and identities can experience Economic Abuse, those from racialized, gender-diverse, and other marginalized communities, as well as low-income and educational backgrounds, are at a higher risk of Economic Abuse.

[CCFWE’s research study](#) conducted in the Greater Ottawa region with victim-survivors confirmed similar studies from the United States, Australia, and the United Kingdom that more than 95% of victims-survivors of domestic abuse have experienced or are experiencing Economic Abuse:

- 92% have experienced their abusive partner keeping financial information from them.
- 93% have had their abusive partner make important financial decisions without them.
- 84% of victims’ abusers have built up debt under their name.

ABOUT THE CANADIAN CENTER FOR WOMEN’S EMPOWERMENT

The Canadian Center for Women’s Empowerment (CCFWE) is the only Canadian national non-profit organization dedicated to addressing Economic Abuse and injustice through advocacy, education, research, economic empowerment, and policy change. It is based in Ottawa.

CCFWE works collaboratively with organizations and individuals to develop a comprehensive approach that enables domestic violence survivors to recover from Economic Abuse. It also addresses critical policy gaps preventing survivors from recovering and becoming economically secure and independent.

Website: <https://ccfwe.org/>

Contact:

Michaela Mayer (she/her/elle)
Director of Policy, Canadian Center for Women's Empowerment
Email: michaela.mayer@ccfwe.org

Meseret Haileyesus
Executive Director
Email: mesi.haileyesus@ccfwe.org