

A call to BC LEADERS



Smart family policy for a strong economy and healthy society

THE EVIDENCE

29% of BC children are vulnerable as they enter kindergarten. Vulnerable children are more likely to commit crimes or become sick as adults; and they are less likely to succeed in school, or be job ready when they graduate.

Work-life conflict is stretching into middle- and upper-income homes, where the majority of vulnerable BC children reside.

Since parents are an integral part of the labour market, the business community confronts the same work-life pressures that challenge families raising young children. Preventable absenteeism, productivity losses, recruitment, retention and extended benefits cost BC businesses \$1 billion per year today.

A 29% early vulnerability rate is also a massive brain drain that compromises the quality of the future labour force, and BC's competitiveness.

THE IMPLICATION

Without strong families, we cannot build a strong economy.

Forecasts suggest preventable early vulnerability will cost BC's economy 20% of GDP over the working lives of children who start kindergarten today. Why? Because more vulnerable children mean fewer innovative adults to grow the economy, support an aging population and address climate change.

A CALL TO ACTION IN LEADERSHIP DEBATES

The high early vulnerability rate in BC sounds a warning that the current approach to supporting families with young children comes at significant costs for all British Columbians; it costs BC businesses on their bottom line; and it costs society now and for generations to come.

We call on BC's political leaders to address the family policy deficit:

- Families need smart family policy to provide more time, more services and/or more income.
- Businesses need smart family policy to improve their bottom line.
- Society needs smart family policy to advance gender equality, population health, crime reduction and a fair start for kids.

Signed,

Janet Austin, CEO, Vancouver YWCA

Warren Beach, CFO, Sierra Systems

Yuri Fulmer, CEO, FDC Capital Partners

Darlene Gering, CEO, Burnaby Board of Trade

Debi Hewson, CEO, Odlum Brown

Anita Huberman, CEO, Surrey Board of Trade

Barbara Kaminsky, Chair, BC Healthy Living Alliance

Kevin Layden, CEO, Wesbild

Michael McKnight, CEO United Way of the Lower Mainland

Evi Mustel, Principal, Mustel Group

Sue Paish, CEO, Pharmasave

Moura Quayle, UBC Sauder School of Business

Catherine Van Alstine, Partner, Odgers Berndtson

Dick Vollet, CEO Streetohome

Tamara Vrooman, CEO, Vancity

Catherine Warren, President, FanTrust Entertainment Strategies

Faye Wightman, CEO, Vancouver Foundation

►► For more information contact:

Suromitra Sanatani - SSanatani@Heenan.ca or 250.381.9321

Paul Kershaw - paul.kershaw@ubc.ca or 604.827.5393