

Hon. Doug Ford, Premier, Government of Ontario  
[Doug.Fordco@pc.ola.org](mailto:Doug.Fordco@pc.ola.org)

Dear Premier Ford:

I am writing on behalf of the **Canadian Federation of University (CFUW) Southport** in Saugeen Shores (Huron-Bruce). CFUW is a non-partisan national organization with 94 clubs, 48 of which are in Ontario. CFUW Southport currently has 104 members; nationally, there are over 6,500. Throughout our 105+ year history, CFUW has endeavoured to improve the status of women through educational and economic equity as well as social justice advocacy. Although non-partisan, CFUW encourages all women to participate fully in our democracy at all levels of government.

This history is why CFUW Southport Members remain concerned about the incident that occurred on Wednesday, March 6<sup>th</sup> when Lucille Collard, MPP for Ottawa-Vanier, rose in the Legislature to request that independent women MPPs be given five minutes collectively to respond to the Minister's statement on International Women's Day. Perhaps you were not aware of the implications or appearance of the incident that followed as you were otherwise engaged in conversation with your back to the speaker and to Lucille Collard. This video clearly shows what happened: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7GtNOYbyf14>. CFUW Southport Members echo the gasp!

CFUW Southport members wish to express our concern at hearing Paul Calandra's resounding "No," effectively silencing Lucille Collard and other women Independents. While **International Women's Day** holds great significance for CFUW Members, the Government of Ontario is the government for all Ontarians, including women of all ridings and party affiliations. Therefore, any attempt to silence women leaves us feeling disrespected and disturbed. This is especially troubling considering women elected to various governments across Canada who have been subjected to similar derision; some have recently resigned because of it.

CFUW Southport Members know unanimous consent was achieved on Thursday, March 7<sup>th</sup>, when MPP Andrea Hazell (Scarborough-Guildwood) repeated Lucille Collard's request. However, we are not aware of any formal apology to date. To simply ignore the harm done suggests that your government does not take women's rights seriously and does not value women's voices in general. We trust that that is not true. CFUW Southport Members believe all women elected to serve, and indeed all women of Ontario regardless of political affiliation, deserve a sincere apology from you, Premier Ford, for what appears to be an attempt to silence women's voices. Respectfully, we await your response and wish you and yours a Happy International Women's Day.

Sincerely

*Odette Bartnicki*

Odette Bartnicki, M.A.Ed.  
President, CFUW Southport

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