CLUB LETTERHEAD

DATE

NAME OF REPRESENTATIVE, RIDING

House of Commons

Ottawa, Ontario

K1A 0A6 /APPROPRIATE ADDRESS

**Re: Immigration Detention in Canada**

Dear [INSERT NAME OF MP/MPP/MLA/MNA/MHA],

I am writing on behalf of [INSERT CLUB NAME], an affiliate of the Canadian Federation of University Women (CFUW), a national, non-partisan, voluntary, self-funded organization with 94 clubs across Canada and over 6,600 members. Our mission is to achieve educational and economic equality and social justice through continuous learning and empowerment. Our vision is that women and girls are educated and empowered to make transformative change in the world.

CFUW [INSERT CLUB NAME] urges the federal government to **gradually phase out the use of correctional facilities for the purpose of detaining immigrants**, taking into consideration public safety and security. In 2022-2023, over 5,000 foreign nationals and permanent residents were detained by Canada Border Services Agency (CBSA), without facing criminal charges. These detainees are kept in Immigration Holding Centres and correctional facilities, which often impose restrictions that deny them of their liberty and dignity.

Many individuals flee war, racial/religious/sexual persecution, or torture to seek a safe haven in Canada, only to experience restrictive conditions like being handcuffed and placed in solitary confinement with no outside contact. This policy creates serious consequences for immigrants’ mental health. Research by Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch found that detention can exacerbate existing psychosocial disabilities in detainees and trigger new ones, namely depression, anxiety, and post-traumatic stress.

As of this writing, seven provinces (British Columbia, Nova Scotia, Alberta, Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Quebec, and New Brunswick) have cancelled their contracts with CBSA to incarcerate immigrants in provincial jails. CFUW [INSERT CLUB NAME] urges the **end of all provincial and territorial contracts with the CBSA** for the purpose of detaining immigrants in correctional facilities.

The pandemic prompted detention numbers to drop significantly, demonstrating that alternatives to detention are feasible. These alternatives include Electronic Monitoring programs, Community Case Management and Supervision programs, and transforming Immigration Holding Centres into welcoming centres with support services and freedom of movement. CFUW [INSERT CLUB NAME] urges all levels of government to **collaborate to develop, fund, and utilize alternative options** to monitor immigrants that treat them with dignity and respect.

Lastly, CFUW [INSERT CLUB NAME] urges you to **support the passage of Bill C-20** to create the Public Complaints and Review Commission. Establishing an independent review and complaints body for the activities of CBSA is an overdue measure that will help ensure greater accountability and transparency.

We would be pleased to meet to discuss this letter and our concerns.

Yours sincerely,

[CLUB PRESIDENT SIGNATURE]

NAME OF PRESIDENT

CLUB NAME