Balancing Act Letter Template

Subject (optional): Supporting Artist/Arts Worker Mothers, Parents, and Caregivers

To whom it may concern,

The arts sector is built on passion, creativity, and resilience—but it is also structured in ways that systematically exclude those with caregiving responsibilities.

Across disciplines, artistic work is characterized by inflexible, late, and extended working hours—whether on film sets, in rehearsal halls, or during live performances. It often requires significant travel and touring, and relies on short-term contracts or commission work (visual artists & playwrights) without benefits such as parental leave. It is often a culture where stigma persists: the assumption that a mother, parent, or caregiver is less available, less committed, less professional, or less capable.

These conditions create profound barriers for artists and arts workers who are mothers, parents, and caregivers. They disproportionately affect women and gender-diverse artists, who continue to carry the majority of unpaid care work.

Artists should not have to choose between sustaining a career and raising a family. Nor can our arts sector afford to lose vital talent from the field because its structures fail to support them.

The labour of mothers, parents, and caregivers must be recognized as foundational—not peripheral—to both our economy and our cultural life. Unpaid care work accounts for an estimated 35% of GDP in Canada. In 2024, arts and culture contributed $65 billion in direct GDP to the economy. We cannot ignore the person who is a common denominator between these figures: the artists who are also caregivers, whose labour sustains both spheres.

If mothers are not supported, our communities are not supported. Our economy is not sustainable. Our arts and culture sector cannot thrive. And the individuals who depend on that care—children, families, and communities—are directly affected.

At a time when childcare systems remain precarious, when 1 in 2 Canadians will become a caregiver in their lifetime, and when broader social currents threaten to roll

back hard-won gender equity gains, the need for action is urgent. Caregivers must be supported in their ability to participate fully and equitably in the workforce.

We must build an arts sector that acknowledges the realities of caregiving and actively works to remove the barriers it creates. This includes rethinking working conditions, investing in family-inclusive policies, addressing stigma, and ensuring that caregivers are not excluded from opportunities due to structural inequities.

Supporting artist mothers, parents, and caregivers is not a niche issue—it is essential to the sustainability, diversity, and excellence of our cultural sector.

We all depend on care, and we are all interdependent. It is time our systems reflect that.

Sincerely,

[Your Name / Organization]

BALANCING ACT