



NEWS RELEASE

Equal Voice Challenges Ontario Party Leaders to Nominate More Women for Election 2011

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

TORONTO - All three Ontario party leaders, Premier Dalton McGuinty, Opposition Leader, Tim Hudak and NDP Leader, Andrea Horwath have been challenged by Equal Voice to nominate more women for the upcoming election in the fall of 2011. Each leader has been sent a letter requesting a renewed commitment to electing more women.

Before the election of 2007, all parties committed in the legislature to nominating more women – and a record number of women ran for office that fall. Ontario went from 22% in 2003 to 26% currently. What the initiative also did do was encourage more women to run; establish a culture in the parties of searching harder for more women candidates; and set an example for other women interested in political office. And women do win: in the 2007 election, 9 new women were welcomed to the Legislature.

In Ontario, according to research by Equal Voice, Canada's multi-partisan action group dedicated to electing more women, progress takes time. "The first time a woman was elected provincially, it was 1943," explains Lesley Byrne, Chair Equal Voice Founding Chapter, "It's taken over six decades to even get to 25%."

In June of this year, Equal Voice hosted a large group of high school girls at the Ontario Legislature as part of its Experiences program. (<http://www.equalvoice.ca/experiences/>) The Lieutenant Governor and MPPs from all parties came to speak and were enthusiastic about the prospects for women in the Legislature.

"We are very encouraged by the commitment of all of the parties to encourage more women to get involved in politics," said Byrne, "But it's critically important that the parties take concrete action before nomination contests occur to ensure that more women are nominated so that more women can take their rightful place in the House."

Equal Voice national has also launched a Canada Challenge Campaign to ensure that federal parties elect more women.

Equal Voice will continue to report regularly on the leader's commitment to nominating more women as well as on nominated candidates throughout the period leading up to the next provincial election in October of 2011. Nominations close 2 weeks before election day.



PROMOTING THE ELECTION OF WOMEN IN CANADA
PROMOUVOIR L'ÉLECTION DES FEMMES AU CANADA



Equal Voice is a group of more than 1200 women and men nation-wide, who have formed a multi-partisan non-profit organization devoted to the still-bold idea that more women must be elected to every level of government in Canada. (www.equalvoice.ca and Facebook group <http://www.facebook.com/group.php?gid=2228641067>)

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