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To Gilles Duceppe,  
Leader of the Bloc Quebecois,  
House of Commons, Ottawa, ON, K1A 0A6

Dear Mr. Duceppe:

I am writing to you on behalf of Equal Voice, a national, volunteer advocacy group for the election of more women. We are multi-partisan, working with members of all parties, to build a cross-party consensus on fairer representation in political life.

We wrote to you before the last election about nominating more women candidates, and we are writing again to urge you to use your power as leader to ensure that your party has more women running in 2006. Our National Capital Region chapter is tracking nominations to date, and so far the Bloc Quebecois' slate of candidates is only 25 per cent female. At this rate, you will not increase the number of women members sitting for your party in the House of Commons.

I'm sure you are aware that the House now includes only 65 women, or 21 per cent of the total. Women aspire to be full partners in public life, not relegated to minority status. Yet progress in this regard has been stalled for more than a decade, and this snap election seems likely to perpetuate the status quo. Canada now ranks 43<sup>rd</sup> among world democracies judged by the numbers of elected women in their national legislatures.

So, we urge you to intervene personally in your party's nomination process, and to demand that more women are nominated as Bloc Quebecois candidates. We also urge that, in the longer term, you support electoral reform, particularly adding seats elected by proportional representation, to help redress the serious gender imbalance in the Commons.

We in Equal Voice would be proud to work with your party to that end.

Rosemary Speirs, National Chair Equal Voice,  
1815 Altona Road, Pickering, ON, L1V 1M6  
[rspeirs@equalvoice.ca](mailto:rspeirs@equalvoice.ca)