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To The Rt. Hon. Paul Martin, Prime Minister of Canada  
Leader of the Liberal Party of Canada,  
House of Commons, Ottawa, ON, K1A 0A6

Dear Mr. Martin:

In the past you expressed strong support for the aim of Equal Voice, which is to elect more women, so we believe you are sympathetic to our cause. We are writing you, once again, urging you to intervene personally in the nomination process-- even at this late stage-- to ensure more Liberal women are nominated for the 2006 election.

As you know, Equal Voice is a national volunteer organization that works with all major political parties for fairer representation in politics. Our National Capital chapter is tracking nominations and finding that so far we cannot expect any improvement in the number of women in the next House of Commons.

The Liberal party, at 32 per cent women candidates, is doing better than some of the other parties, and for that we congratulate you and your organizers. But the number of women elected to federal office has been stalled at about 21 per cent for more than a decade now. We urgently need a breakthrough.

While women in other countries are entering politics in ever greater numbers, we in Canada are moving backwards. Organizers are finding it difficult to persuade women to play in a game that they perceive as too rough or rigged against them. Worse, young women are being turned off, and are even less likely to vote or participate in politics than young men. Canada has recently fallen to 43<sup>rd</sup> place in world rankings of countries by the number of women elected to their national legislatures.

We urge you to make every possible effort to demonstrate that the Liberal Party of Canada wants women as equal players. In the short term, we urge you to use your powers as party leader to field more women on the Liberal team in this election. In the longer term, we ask you to introduce voting reform that includes at least an element of proportional representation to help redress the imbalance in our national Parliament.

Equal Voice would be proud to work with your party to this end.

Thank you

Rosemary Speirs  
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