



*The following letter was sent to the leaders of each political party on Friday, November 25:*

We are writing on behalf of the National Capital Region Chapter of Equal Voice (EV:NCR), a multi-partisan organization dedicated to addressing the under-representation of women in Canadian governments and encouraging political parties to nominate and elect more women.

Our Chapter was formed in 2004, after the federal election returned disappointing results – women made up only 21% of this parliament. Over the past year we have held several events to help draw the public's attention to this important issue, to discuss the barriers Canadian women face in trying to enter politics, and to examine best practices in democracies that have a better record of electing women than our country.

With this election, parties are trying to fill vacancies in their nominations as quickly as possible. We are concerned that a rush to nominate may compromise political parties' commitment to ensuring their candidates represent the diversity of the Canadian population. We are calling upon each party leader to make a clear commitment to securing women candidates and helping them get elected.

To that end, we are asking each party leader four questions:

- 1) In the current context of electoral urgency, what special measures will you use to ensure that more women are nominated to run in this election?
- 2) What targeted or strategic efforts will your party take to support your women candidates in this election?
- 3) Are you willing to have a question on addressing the under-representation of women in parliament included in the televised leaders debates?
- 4) What concrete changes do you propose to address the under-representation of women in the House of Commons?

Polling has clearly demonstrated that a strong majority of Canadians believe that our democracy would be strengthened if more women were elected. In order for women to be elected, however, they have to be recruited and nominated. To accomplish this, we need a clear commitment from our political leaders to help women break through the parliamentary glass ceiling that seems to be fixed at twenty percent.

Best regards.

Raylene Lang-Dion, Chair

182 Cluny Street, Ottawa, Ontario, K1G 0K2

Vicky Smallman, Vice-Chair