



Don Plett, Interim Council Chair  
Conservative Party of Canada  
#1720 - 130 Albert Street  
Ottawa, Ontario  
K1P 5G4

February 21, 2005

Dear Don,

We are writing on behalf of the National Capital chapter of Equal Voice, a multipartisan organization dedicated to encouraging and improving the participation of women in Canadian politics.

This is a crucial time for women in Canadian politics. Despite the gains that women have made over the past century - winning the right to vote and run for political office, making gains in the workplace and other successes - we still find ourselves vastly outnumbered in the House of Commons. In the last election, all parties fell far short of a balance between the genders in their slate of nominated candidates, and only 56 women were elected. This represents a step backward from the previous parliament, which had 63 women.

According to recent polling by the Centre for Research and Information on Canada, 9 out of 10 Canadians support increasing the number of women in elected office in order to achieve a well-functioning political system. Equal Voice was founded to help us make this support a reality.

We are encouraging all national political parties to make a concerted effort to encourage the participation of women in politics and to help women secure nominations and win elections.

One of the best training grounds for future political leaders is to become involved in one's party. Individuals gain valuable experience, make connections, learn how our political process works and hone leadership and communications skills. By working toward gender balance among a party's officers, commission and committee chairs and other leadership roles, and by encouraging and supporting strong women to take on these roles, the Conservative Party can have a real impact on the makeup of our political system.

Your convention in March is a perfect opportunity to send a message to your members and to Canadian voters: that the Conservative party is ready to take a lead in addressing the under-representation of women in Canadian politics.

Sincerely,

Nikki Macdonald  
Chair  
Equal Voice, National Capital Chapter

Vick y Smallman  
Vice-Chair

c.c. Denis Jollette, Chair, Nominations Committee