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December 10, 2008

Mr. Michael Ignatieff  
Room 435-S, Centre Block  
House of Commons  
Ottawa, ON K1A 0A6

Dear Mr. Ignatieff:

I am writing to you on behalf of Equal Voice, a national multi-partisan group promoting the election of more women. As you know, we work with members of all political parties, to build a cross-party consensus on fairer representation in political life. Equal Voice enjoys the support of its members in chapters from coast to coast to coast.

The issue of women in politics has never been more in the spotlight than now and Canadians want to know where are our women members of parliament.

Through the Canada Challenge in April 2007, Equal Voice received commitments from all political parties to elect more women to the House of Commons. The results were in evidence when the October 2008 Federal Election saw more women nominated than ever before. The Liberal Party nominated a record 113 women, or 37 per cent of their candidates, the largest number of women ever to run for the party; congratulations!

We were encouraged to see a record number of women elected in 2008 although representation now stands at 22.4%, up from 21.6% in 2006; hardly a significant improvement and not where we need to be. Prime Minister Harper did appoint 11 women to Cabinet bringing the percentage to 29%, a step in the right direction.

With a leadership change on the horizon in the Liberal Party, now is the time, Mr. Ignatieff, to renew your commitment to gender equality that you made in the 2006 leadership race: *"make gender parity a core continuing political and organizational objective of our Party's life - reflected by commitment at all levels of the Party machinery."* What measures are you taking to ensure fairer representation in the Liberal Party? What will you do to raise Canada's national standing from an embarrassing 46<sup>th</sup> ranking internationally for women in parliament?

We count on you to make the under-representation of women in political office a priority as you undertake the Liberal leadership.

Best regards,

Françoise Gagnon  
National Executive Director  
Equal Voice

Cc : Raylene Lang-Dion, National Chair and Donna Dasko, National Vice-Chair