



Letter To Dalton McGuinty

*Hon. Dalton McGuinty,
Office of the Premier,
Main Legislative Building, Queen's Park,
Toronto, Ontario,
M7A 1A1*

Dear Premier McGuinty:

We are seeking your government's support for reforms that will help more women get elected in Ontario.

As you know, only 21 per cent of the seats in the Legislature are held by women. At the present rate of change, we in Equal Voice calculate it will take four more generations before our half of the population can hope to achieve equal representation in the Ontario house.

We are aware that you personally—and your Ontario Liberal Party—made real efforts in the last provincial election to attract more female candidates. Despite that, only small gains were made in the numbers nominated and elected.

Equal Voice hopes that electing more women will be a priority as your government proceeds with its “democratic renewal” agenda. Without a clear and specific commitment-- written into the mandate of whatever process you establish--, we fear that women's representation will once again be put on the backburner.

In British Columbia, the Citizen's Assembly, established to recommend a new electoral system for the province, has opted for a voting reform called the Single Transferable Vote. Unfortunately, the B.C. government did not ask the Citizen's Assembly to include electing more women in its guiding principles. If it had done so, we believe the Assembly would have tailored its recommendations to better increase women's representation.

That is why we believe it is so crucially important to obtain your commitment to women's political equality in the early stages of the government's consultations. I attach a recent poll that shows nine out of 10 Canadians support increasing the number of women in elected office—the public's highest priority for electoral reform.

We in Equal Voice are asking the government: (1) to put electing women high on its list of electoral reform priorities; (2) to place strict limits on election financing to lower the money barrier to women's candidacies; (3) serious consideration for the report of the



Law Commission of Canada which recommended a Mixed Member Proportional voting system (which in Scotland, Germany and New Zealand has substantially increased the number of elected women); (4) requirements for political parties to adopt targets or other effective mechanisms for nominating more women.

We hope that you, Mr. Premier, will be supportive of our effort.

Sincerely, Rosemary Speirs, chair Equal Voice
1815 Altona Road,
Pickering, Ontario
L1V 1M6

(Equal Voice is a multi-partisan national advocacy group for the election of more women. We are all volunteers, and include elected politicians and party activists from all major parties, as well as professionals, bureaucrats, interested voters and students. See our bilingual website www.equalvoice.ca)