



PROMOTING THE ELECTION OF WOMEN IN CANADA
PROMOUVOIR L'ÉLECTION DES FEMMES AU CANADA



NEWS RELEASE

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For Immediate Release

Federal party leaders pledge to close gender gap by nominating more women

OTTAWA – As Parliament rises for a summer recess that promises a flood of nomination meetings, leaders of the federal political parties today are making a commitment to nominate more women as candidates to run for their parties, whenever the next election may take place.

Equal Voice representatives were joined by Minister Helena Guergis, Liberal MP Anita Neville, Bloc Québécois MP Nicole Demers, and NDP MP Libby Davies for a press conference on Parliament Hill where Equal Voice released the results of a poll conducted by Environics Research Group. The poll demonstrates that Canadians want to see more women in elected politics in this country.

“The polling data released today reinforces the reality that Canadians want the opportunity to vote for more women at the ballot box,” said Donna Dasko, Equal Voice’s National Chair and Environics’ Senior Vice-President.

Minister Helena Guergis who spoke at Equal Voice’s press conference emphasized that women must have every opportunity to “make a meaningful contribution to democratic life in Canada, which includes the option of running for elected office.”

Opposition Party leaders and a representative from the government made statements in the House of Commons today shortly after 2:00 p.m.

“The Liberal Party is committed to having more women in politics, in Parliament, and in government after the next election,” said Liberal Leader Michael Ignatieff. “On behalf of my Party, I commit that no fewer than one-third of our Liberal candidates will be women in the next election.”

Bloc Québécois leader Gilles Duceppe added that his party was pleased to be making this commitment. “Our party is actively working to increase the number of candidates within its ranks. Currently, the Bloc Québécois is comprised of 31% women and we have no intention of stopping there.”

New Democratic Party leader Jack Layton remarked that they were pleased to sign on to the Challenge as “the NDP remains committed to an equal voice for women in Canadian politics. We’ve run outstanding women, elected them and been led by them. But we can and will do better.”

Elizabeth May, speaking from Halifax, Leader of the Green Party said “we need more women candidates to ensure that the issues important to Canadians are raised and important questions asked. Democracy is precious and more women need to get involved to ensure that its integrity is preserved in this country.”

Ms. Dasko added “Women make up 52 percent of the population but only 22.4 percent of Parliament. We want to close this gender gap and we look to the parties to play a major role. Canadian voters decide who wins elections but the political parties decide who wins nominations.”

In the 2009 Canada Challenge, Equal Voice is asking the federal parties to nominate more women to run and to improve their female representation in Parliament. In the 2008 federal election, 28 percent of all candidates were women, a historic high of any federal election.

Equal Voice is a national advocacy organization dedicated to promoting the election of more women at all levels of government.

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