

# Brief to the Status of Women's Committee

## Study on Barriers to Women Entering Politics

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### **ISSUES:**

- 1) Barriers to women becoming representatives in the House of Commons.
- 2) This document is putting forth an idea that could finally fill our House of Commons with the female perspective that is needed to have a government that is truly responsive to the needs of 100% of the populace not just 50%. That would be true democracy.

### **PROBLEM:**

- 1) The prevailing bias favouring the choice of male candidates over female by the political parties.
- 2) The sexual harrasement of women in parliamentary situations.

### **SOLUTION:**

- 1) Access is vital to achieve the outcome wanted. We need to create two seats in each constituency a female seat and a male seat. To do this would require a redrawing of the Map of Constituencies to make half as many constituencies but with a female and a male representative in each. This would guarantee by law a 50% representation of both women and men in the House of Commons. Our 3 territories would need an extra seat each as they only have 1 seat per territory presently.

- 2) If women believed becoming an MP was a true option as a career choice more would choose to do so. If they knew that there was a seat waiting for them if they compete for and win against all of the other female candidates in their riding this would make the possibility far more enticing.
- 3) Make it the responsibility of the political parties to find the women to run in the constituency or they forfeit that seat set aside in a constituency for a female representative. They will find a female candidate if the alternative is losing the seat.
- 4) We have a country that is 52% female, where women make up 50% of the workforce, and during elections women vote in greater numbers than men do, yet there is only a 26% representation in the House of Commons by women. We all pay our taxes and while the government spends billions of dollars each year, women have little say or input as to how those dollars are allocated. We need a gender balanced elected government guaranteed by electoral reform to bring the perspective of 100% of the population to the discussions not just the vision of half of our populace.
- 5) Female constituents need to know that when the conversations are taking place in committee that there are people there who have similar experiences to their own in relationship to career, family, as possible victims of violence, as care givers to the elderly and in women's health. Women's experiences are different, they have a different frame of reference and reaction to life. Women need to know that their government is not talking at them but to them out of consideration for their needs and that can only happen if half of the representatives are women spread out amongst all of the parties. Women could no more adequately represent men fully than men can adequately represent women. If women's lives are being directed through laws by a government that does not understand their needs wants and desires then women feel they are being talked at not collaborated with.
- 6) This is a totally bipartisan solution. As electoral reform goes this would have the greatest effect on the largest part of the population with the least cost while creating a larger pool of women to fill those committee and cabinet posts.

- 7) This is a solution to a problem women have spent 100 years trying to solve. Many organizations have diligently worked to increase women's representation in parliament, but it has been a very slow, and painful evolution. Even if there was an election where women actually attained 50% representation in the House of Commons without the laws in place it would not make it a consistently ongoing situation. It could be turned around at the next election then possibly not happen again for another 50 years. A solution that would by law guarantee women 50% participation forever is needed so that their perspective is there 100% of the time for the rest of our future. A solution that resonates well with half of the population while not even being aware that it could have unseen consequences for the other half of the population is not a solution. Without women there to give a female perspective questions that the government did not ask because you did know the need to ask them could have far reaching results.
- 8) Our government over the years has made major errors in judgement because of arrogance and belief that it knew best, that it had all the information needed without asking for input from all of the people the action they took had an effect on. Let us stop doing this and make it law that women are to be at the table for discussions on how we solve issues, for the important questions that need to be asked so we come up with solutions that are of benefit to all of us not just half of us.
- 9) A news article in the Lancet Feb.10, 2018 "The Glass Cliff Effect for Women in STEM" speaks to the abundance of misogynistic attitudes towards women taking that career path. The conclusion was that it has a lot to do with the low ratio of women to men. That is repeated in many career paths including our own government. If we are serious about making parliament a safer place for women to be involved in the governing of our country we need more women in the halls of the House of Commons in positions of power. This is that first step.
- 10) This would truly be a ground breaking, evolutionary step on the path of democracy. Canada would be saying we truly value our women not just in words but in action. We want them as partners in the future decisions for our country. We would be an example to the world to show this kind of leadership.