



## Electoral Reform for Women

[www.equalvoiceinpolitics.ca](http://www.equalvoiceinpolitics.ca)

**ON OCTOBER 10<sup>th</sup> CHOOSE MORE DEMOCRACY, MORE REPRESENTATION, MORE FAIRNESS. ON OCTOBER 10<sup>th</sup> CHOOSE MMP!**

On October 10th, the citizens of Ontario have a wonderful opportunity—and probably the last for many decades—to achieve reforms to our outmoded electoral system. We believe the reforms would help more women get elected.

Reform is vital because Canada is one of the few modern democracies still clinging to our old Westminster model of electing Members from local ridings. As a result, we stand 48th in the world in terms of the number of women in our House of Commons (just under 21 per cent), and in recent years the numbers of women standing and being elected has started to decline.

This is why a group of Equal Voice members from across the province, united under the Doris Anderson Fund for Electoral Reform, have concluded that for fair representation in politics we must change our electoral system. You will be presented with this opportunity on October 10th. When you go to the polls to vote, there will be a referendum question posed to you asking whether you want to keep the current system (first-pass-the-post) or change to the system that we are advocating for - Mixed Member Proportional.

The Oct. 10 referendum could throw open the doors of the male political club. Out there in the ridings, local riding associations still conclude that white male professionals are the best candidates, so we end up with party slates that are 80 per cent male even when party leaders are publicly calling for more women. A victory for Mixed Member Proportional in Canada's most populous province would likely set off a domino effect. It is a last chance because efforts at electoral reform have failed or floundered recently in PEI, New Brunswick, Quebec and B.C. So many of the decisions that impact women disproportionately -- such as child care, home care, and reproductive choice-- lie so largely in the hands of men. It is time more women were in office helping men make decisions which often effect women more.

The Citizens' Assembly on Electoral Reform (103 Ontarians randomly chosen by Elections Ontario) is recommending moderate change--keeping a majority of seats (90) still elected in the ridings in the old way, but a minority (39) elected by Proportional Representations. They are calling it a Mixed Member Proportional system. This system is used successfully in New Zealand, Germany, Scotland and Wales, resulting in stable coalition governments in which more women play partner roles. Voters would get two votes--one for a local riding representative and another for their favorite party's "list" of candidates for the PR seats. No modern party would dare present a public list that did not include good gender balance and visible minority candidates. The result would be more women in the Legislature, and likely more women of color. The Legislature and the Government would more fairly represent the actual makeup of the population. (There are now only 26 women

(25 per cent) in the 103-seat Legislature and only eight Members who are visible minority. Both figures are half what they should be based on provincial demographics).

We are asking you to support us in voting for change. The Government has set an incredibly onerous bar--to succeed the Mixed system must get 60 per cent of the votes in 60 per cent of ridings. We need all of you to participate if we are going to change the status quo.

Our present method of electing our politicians systemically discriminates against women. They simply do not get nominated in enough numbers to make a difference. This is our opportunity to change all that. We invite you on October 10th to choose MMP!

For further information and resources, please visit our website at [www.equalvoiceinpolitics.ca](http://www.equalvoiceinpolitics.ca). If you are interested in participating in the campaign, email Michelle Dagnino at [mdagnino@equalvoice.ca](mailto:mdagnino@equalvoice.ca).

On October 10th Choose MMP - [www.equalvoiceinpolitics.ca](http://www.equalvoiceinpolitics.ca)

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