Women in the House
A Reader on New Brunswick Women in the Legislative Assembly
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N.B. Advisory Council on the Status of Women
A body created by provincial legislation to study and advise on issues of concern to
women and to bring these before the public and the government.

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Women In The House - A Reader on New Brunswick Women
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Message from the Chairperson

Elsie Hambrook
Chairperson of the New Brunswick Advisory Council on the Status of Women

Why do we need more women in the Legislative Assembly of New Brunswick?

• Because women pay taxes.
• Because right now in 2010, only about 10% of the MLAs are women.
• Because women and men share responsibility in other aspects of society.
• Because balance is better than dominance of either sex.
• Because women seek change and politics is part of how change is made.
• Because, as management and investment gurus tell us, the best ideas and performances come from teams with diversity and a range of experience.
• Because getting your talent from 100% of the pool is better than half of the pool.
• Because men’s lives, viewpoints and priorities are often different from women’s.
• Because, to borrow a saying from the disabled people’s movement, Nothing About Us, Without Us – or as a member of the Welsh Assembly said in 2000, after that country had reached equal representation: “One sex, however sympathetic, cannot fully and fairly represent the interests of the other.”

This publication celebrates those – few – women who have served and are serving in the Legislative Assembly of New Brunswick because they are role models. In politics as in other “non traditional” occupations for women, meeting or learning about women who have done it is extremely effective in getting other women to consider also making the leap into politics.

This publication also provides food for thought - statistics and excerpts - from a variety of sources on the topic of women in politics.
In the series of free Lunch & Learns organized by the New Brunswick Advisory Council in the last few years, over a dozen have been about women in politics. At a recent one in Fredericton, a packed room of women and men of all ages was listening to Canadian expert on gender and politics, Joanna Everitt of Saint John, speak about the sexism, the needed changes and the importance of balance in politics. A twenty-something woman spoke up to say she totally agreed with the need for more women, but the few times when a woman was among the candidates she could vote for, sometimes she felt that the female candidate did not reflect her views. “Should I vote for a woman because she is a woman?” Dr. Everitt handled the question deftly: we need more women in all parties so that you find someone who represents your political views and is a woman.

Getting more women in government is a first necessary step. It will not solve all issues of concern to women. But it will help women ... and may help politics.

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**New Brunswick Advisory Council on the Status of Women**

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Member for Greater Moncton, Dale Marie LeBlanc of Petit-Cap  
Member for Fredericton, Jayme L. J. O’Donnell of Douglas  
Member for Restigouche, Dorothy Hamilton of Dalhousie
Minister Responsible for the Status of Women

Mary Schryer, Liberal MLA, Quispamsis
First elected MLA: 2006.

Mary was a self-employed financial advisor. She has been a councillor on the Quispamsis town council, a member of the board of directors of the Atlantic Health Sciences Corporation, founding director and president of the Kennebecasis Valley Chamber of Commerce and a director of the Rothesay Regional Police Commission and of the Economic Development Commission. Her community involvement also included years of fund-raising for minor hockey, the local theatre group and Brownies.

She has been Minister of State for Seniors and Minister of State for Housing, Minister of Family and Community Services (Social Development) and Minister responsible for the Status of Women and Minister of Health.

As a self-employed person for over 10 years, a former member of the Quispamsis town council and a member of many boards, I have been involved in the community for years. But it was my involvement as the former president and founding director of the Kennebecasis Valley Chamber of Commerce that sparked my interest to get involved in politics.

Since 2006, it has been an honour and a pleasure to serve in public office. Although a major learning curve at times, the experience has been a privilege and has given me the opportunity to help people along the way in different ways.

The most satisfying thing about being an MLA is the opportunity to assist people to resolve issues or situations they may face. We have the ability to offer a voice to those in need and for that I am grateful. We also have the ability to develop policy by process of consultation with citizens.

I believe that we need more women involved in politics and evidence-based data supports that. If I could give advice to any woman looking to be part of a political team, I would remind them that their new role would be very time-demanding; day and night; no matter what day of the week, you are always on the job. But most importantly, I would remind them to never forget their values, trust their instincts, stay calm, believe in what they say and try to find a mentor.
who can help provide great comfort, advice and guidance as you go through the process. I believe these characteristics are the recipe to make a good politician. Never let anyone speak for you, once you have found your voice at the table with your colleagues, be true to yourself and be confident in what you believe.

Other Current Female Members of the Legislative Assembly of New Brunswick - Path to Politics and Lessons Learned

Margaret-Ann Blaney, Progressive Conservative MLA, Rothesay

Margaret-Ann worked as a political reporter for private radio and television stations. She and her husband started the Atlantic Veterinary Hospital in Rothesay, in which she was co-owner/ general manager until 1999. She has been involved with many community organizations.

She has been Minister of Transportation, Minister of Public Safety and Minister of Training and Employment Development and Labour. She was Minister responsible for the Status of Women for seven years starting in 1999. Margaret-Ann is the Opposition Critic for health, the status of women and the Executive Council.

My path to politics was maybe a bit different than most because, as a political reporter before getting into politics, I was involved in the political landscape already. The leap was not as great as for some other women. However, it was certainly different being on the other end of the microphone and that was the first adaptation – having answers to the questions.

I must say that what I find most satisfying about being in politics is the problem solving. The great majority of my time is spent doing advocacy/ social work/ lobbying on behalf of people who have contacted me for help in working the system. I’m elected as a legislator and we do that but what is less known, less visible, is all the work with people who contact me, and not just from my
Madeleine Dubé, Progressive Conservative MLA, Edmundston-Saint-Basile

Madeleine (Mado) is a social worker and worked for Health and Community Services and Region 4 Hospital Corporation Drug Addiction Service. She was co-owner and president of a human development agency. She is certified in the fields of family mediation, grievance mediation, defusing/debriefing, suicide prevention and toxicology. She is co-founder and was treasurer of the Association des programmes d’aide aux employés du Nouveau-Brunswick, and was a director of the Association des foyers de groupe du Madawaska.

Madeleine has been Minister of Education, Minister of Family and Community Services and Minister responsible for Seniors. She chairs the Official Opposition Caucus and is Opposition Critic for Social Development and the Regional Development Corporation. She has been critic for Business New Brunswick and Population Growth Secretariat.

She is past-president of the Edmundston Progressive Conservative Association and is involved in policy development for the New Brunswick
Women in the House

Progressive Conservative Party. She is the vice-president of the New Brunswick Branch of the Assemblée parlementaire de la Francophonie.

*My involvement in politics was a natural extension of my involvement in the community, starting with school student council and continuing later in my professional years. Then, when there were some cuts to provincial social programs, I saw that I needed to get involved in provincial politics, to understand how decisions were taken in that place, the Legislative Assembly, because it was affecting people I cared about.*

*I get the most satisfaction out of the job from working with the people in my community on projects, carrying a project to fruition. The most difficult part of the job was early on after my election, my children were pre-adolescent and there was an intense long period when I was there only a few days out of the week. That was hard, but I guess it was harder on me than on the family, because I had a great strong network, a network that I made larger because I knew what would be required.*

*If I had advice to give women it would be to risk it. Dare to do what you want to do. Don’t underestimate people. I was the first woman elected in my riding and there was concern whether people would vote for a woman. Voters recognize someone who is sincere and wants to make a difference and they will vote for you.*

**L. Joan MacAlpine-Stiles, Liberal MLA, Moncton West**
*First elected MLA: 1999 as a Progressive Conservative MLA, re-elected 2003 and 2006; joined the Liberal caucus in 2007.*

Joan has sat on the board of the Moncton Hospital, Multiple Sclerosis Society, Canadian Cancer Society, Red Cross and Alzheimer Society. She was president of a local Home and School Association, volunteered on the International Women’s Day Committee, Community Policing Board, museum board, etc. She was a municipal councillor and Moncton’s first female deputy mayor. She has been Minister of Municipalities, Minister of Business NB, Minister of Family and Community Services and Minister responsible for the Status of Women.
If I were to define one moment when I decided to enter politics, it would be difficult. I often tell the story about the crush I had on a fellow sixth grader, whose dad was running for council in Moncton. It didn’t take me long to realize that one way to get to spend time with the son was to work on the dad’s campaign. After about three weeks of campaigning, I realized I was more interested in politics than in the son. I recall putting up signs and thinking, “One day, I’m going to run for City Council.”

Many years later, after being a wife, mother and caregiver to my aging mother, I decided that the time was right. For many years I had been involved with local organizations, at one time serving on 14 different boards and committees.

My first attempt at politics was unsuccessful. I continued to serve my community and in the next election achieved success, serving three terms on Moncton City Council, one as Moncton’s first female Deputy Mayor. My decision to enter provincial politics came after the police dispute in Moncton in 1996. I was determined to ensure that the municipality had the right to decide which force policed its community. I ran, I won with a large majority and I campaigned to have control returned to the municipality – this was accomplished!

From day one I was a cabinet minister. The civil service employees in this province do a remarkable job and are a joy to work with. At one point, I was a minister for four departments at the same time!

Being able to help people is the greatest reward! Being an MLA has afforded me this privilege. The Department of Family & Community Services, now Social Development, works with New Brunswick’s most vulnerable citizens: people who need housing, financial assistance and a hand up. There is no department of government which is so closely connected with peoples’ lives as this department. The New Brunswick Adoption Foundation was established when I was Minister. As an adoptive child, this file was extremely important to me. Having over 1,000 children find permanent homes because of the work of this foundation and the department has been one of my most satisfying outcomes. Working with the seniors of this province has brought me great reward.

Any job that requires 14,000 people or more to be happy with your performance is a difficult one. You learn early on that you cannot please everyone.

I have been asked if being a female in politics is difficult. Of course it is. As women, we are passionate, determined to do what is best, yet more sensitive than our male counterparts. Political women are always under scrutiny to a large extent. We have to find a balance, where we must rely on our ability and our self-confidence to survive. Politics is an old boys’ club – make no mistake!
As Minister of Family & Community Services, working with single moms and children was the most challenging part of my job – the times when you could not find a solution to their particular problem. As an MLA, the cases where you cannot find satisfactory solutions are the most distressing part.

My advice to women who wish to enter politics is to ensure that you have the unconditional support of your family. Politics is not an easy life, though extremely rewarding. As a politician, you become owned by the electorate. This is not and never will be a 9-5, five days a week job. This job requires one who loves people, loves to socialize, is a good listener, has great patience, compassion, understands that the problem facing that person across the desk from you is, to them, the most pressing problem in the world, and understands that no matter how hard you work on an issue, it may take a long time to resolve. And remember to unwind, it is crucial! You cannot attend every function.

I believe that each of us knows in their own heart if this life is for them. Like any career path, only you can choose.

Something I would have liked to have known before you ran: How to say “No” without feeling guilty.

Carmel Robichaud, Liberal MLA, Miramichi Bay-Neguac

Carmel has been a teacher, coordinator of a French as a second language and immersion program, department head, and vice-principal in schools in New Brunswick, Ontario and Quebec. After her election, she was the Official Opposition Critic for education and the status of women. She has been Minister of Family and Community Services, Minister responsible for the Status of Women, Minister of Local Government and Minister responsible for Community Non-Profit Organizations. Since 2008, she is Deputy Speaker of the House.

Carmel has long been active in the Liberal Party, and served as secretary for the Miramichi Bay Liberal Association and as president of the Miramichi Bay Women’s Liberal Association.
After a full career in education, I was invited to start a second one in politics. I began in 2003 as part of the opposition, and since there have never been courses to tell us how to be an MLA, it was not always easy to know what to do or not to do. But the greatest challenge was as minister in 2006. Again, little is said about how to do what is best for people. What is reassuring is that the deputy ministers and civil servants are there to support and advise you.

Politics had always interested me, and at a very young age I took after my dad who also found politics very inspiring. He was involved in regional politics as a riding president. One thing led to another, and I got on board. I knew that everything happening in our world goes through politics and through education first, so I was going to be involved in the two most influential sectors in life and in our country.

Excellence in education has always been my motto, and as a politician, I am continuing to focus on education in order to advance our province and our community.

The social side of the Liberal Party was one that had always interested me, and I make a point of advancing issues like pay equity, early childhood, minimum wage, social assistance and the poor.

What is often hardest is having to choose between family and politics. It’s not easy. During my first two years as Minister, I lost two of my brothers, and it was very difficult because politics took priority. For government members who have children, the choices must sometimes be heartrending.

Women need to get involved in politics, and I must say, there needs to be equal representation of both genders in our government, because men and women do not solve problems the same way. Even though women have made a lot of progress, it’s clear that the political arena is still a man’s world. You have to adjust. I am certainly not saying you need to react like a man would, but there are not many examples of women who have led governments in our country, so the role models are mostly men. It is important not to fall into the trap and start acting like a man...you must be yourself, gain acceptance for who you are and hold your own.

Courses should be offered at the elementary level to provide leadership training so young people can master the role of leadership and eventually launch into politics or any other leadership position, and in the process help promote a well-balanced society.

It is important to always seek excellence and enjoy what you are doing if you want to succeed.
Cheryl Lavoie, Liberal MLA, Nepisiguit
First elected MLA: 2006.

Cheryl was very involved in her community, including as co-ordinator of the Red Cross swimming program. In 2007, she became the representative of the New Brunswick Branch of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association to the Commonwealth Women Parliamentarians Group.

Cheryl has held several posts in the Liberal Party and served as president of the Nepisiguit Liberal Association from 1994 until 2006, when she stood for election as MLA.

Politics wasn’t a planned career for me, though the desire to serve my community has always been a part of me. I started out in politics as a volunteer putting up election signs, working my way through the ranks to President of the Nepisiguit Liberal Association.

After serving as president of the association for twelve years, I decided that it was time for me to step aside and spend some time with my family. I promised a summer in the garden with my mother planting flowers and more time with my husband and daughter. Little did I know I would instead be planting the seeds to a new career? Prior to the 2006 provincial election, I was called to a meeting in Fredericton where I was asked if I would consider running for the Legislative Assembly of New Brunswick representing Nepisiguit and I immediately hesitated.

Despite working indirectly in politics for over a decade, I questioned my ability to take on an official role in government. That evening I went home wondering if I had made the right decision and after long conversations with both my personal and professional support group, I reconsidered and was elected as MLA in September 2006.

I have learned through my career in politics who I am at my core. It has helped me to realize the extent of my passion for helping others and strengthened my tenacity to stand up for what I think is best for my riding. Each day I know I have the opportunity to contribute to the people of Nepisiguit and to be their voice in government. It is this opportunity, as
well as getting to know the stories of each person I represent, that I find most rewarding in my career.

Being in politics also comes with its share of difficulties. Accepting that I am only one person and as such can’t do everything for everyone can be a difficult and sometimes emotional challenge. There are times when what is best for one person is not what is best for another and having to say no to a member of my community remains the most difficult part of my position. As a politician and especially as a female politician, it can be difficult to turn off at the end of the day and close your mind away from the woes of your constituents but for me it is a personal calling.

If I could provide advice to other women considering a career in politics, it would be to ensure you have: a strong personal support group who understands and supports the time and dedication a career in politics requires, a professional mentor to help guide you through the intricacies of government during your early days, and a strong desire to serve your community. Everyone’s path to politics is different but the opportunity to serve in some capacity is available to each of us.

As a female politician, I owe a great deal of thanks to those who came before me. To those who changed minds about the role a woman can play in government. Now it is time to move past the division of men and women in politics and see only the work that needs to be achieved by us all.
Notes on the 27 Women Elected to the New Brunswick Legislature, 1867–2009

Excerpted from Women MLAs, a publication of the Legislative Library of New Brunswick.

Jane Barry, Liberal
Career before provincial politics: laboratory assistant, chemist, research assistant, business owner.

Margaret-Ann Blaney, Progressive Conservative
Career before provincial politics: political reporter and panelist, television host, co-owner and general manager of a veterinary hospital.

Ann Breault, Liberal
Career before provincial politics: teacher, registered nurse, journalist.
Career in provincial politics: Elected to the New Brunswick Legislature in 1987; re-elected in 1991 and 1995; did not stand for re-election in 1999. Served as Minister of Income Assistance; Minister of State for Literacy, Minister of Municipalities, Culture and Housing and Minister of Health and Community Services.

Beverly Brine, Confederation of Regions (CoR), then Independent
Career before provincial politics: pensions and investment counsellor
Career in provincial politics: President of the Riverview CoR Association, Member of the Provincial Board of CoR. First elected to the New Brunswick Legislature in 1991; did not stand for re-election.
Patricia (Pat) Crossman, Progressive Conservative
Career before provincial politics: volunteer (including School Trustee, president of the New Brunswick School Trustees Association and of the Canadian School Boards Association).

Georgie Day, Liberal
Career before provincial politics: occupational health nurse, nursing advisor, government minister’s executive assistant.
Career in provincial politics: Director of a local Liberal Association. First elected in 1991, re-elected in 1995, defeated in 1999. Served as Minister of State for Literacy and Adult Education; Minister of State for Youth; Minister of Human Resources Development.

Carolle de Ste.Croix, Liberal
Career before provincial politics: teacher, rural planner, government minister’s summer assistant.

Mabel DeWare, Progressive Conservative
Career before provincial politics: dental assistant, manager, Canadian Women’s Curling Champion.
Career in provincial politics: First elected in 1978; re-elected in 1982; defeated in 1987. Served as Minister of Labour and Manpower, Minister of Continuing Education, Minister of Community Colleges, Minister of Advanced Education and Training.

Madeleine Dubé, Progressive Conservative
Career before provincial politics: social worker, co-owner and president of a business, university instructor.
Career in provincial politics: President of the local PC Association. First elected in 1999; re-elected in 2003 and 2006. Served as Minister of Education, Minister of Family and Community Services; Minister responsible for Seniors. Also served as chair of the PC Caucus.

Shirley Dysart, Liberal
Career before provincial politics: teacher.
Career in provincial politics: First elected in 1974; re-elected in 1978, 1982, 1987 and 1991; did not stand for re-election in 1995. Served as Interim Leader of the Opposition. Also served as Minister of Education and as Speaker of the Legislative Assembly of New Brunswick (the first woman).
**Brenda Fowlie, Progressive Conservative**  
*Career before provincial politics: newspaper columnist, member of school board, municipal councillor.*  

**Kim Jardine, Progressive Conservative**  
*Career before provincial politics: business owner, supply teacher: administrative assistant.*  

**Laureen Jarrett, Liberal**  
*Career before provincial politics: teacher.*  

**Carole Keddy, Progressive Conservative**  
*Career before provincial politics: teacher, vice principal and principal, university professor; business owner.*  

**Joan Kingston, Liberal**  
*Career before provincial politics: nurse, manager, president of the Nurses Association of NB, chairperson of the NB Advisory Council on the Status of Women, university instructor.*  

**Aldéa Landry, Liberal**  
*Career before provincial politics: lawyer.*  
Career in provincial politics: president of the NB Liberal Association. First elected in 1987; defeated in 1991. Served as Deputy Premier, Minister responsible for Intergovernmental Affairs, acting Minister of Fisheries and Aquaculture, acting Minister of Housing.
Cheryl Lavoie, Liberal
Career before provincial politics: community volunteer.

L. Joan MacAlpine-Stiles, Progressive Conservative, Liberal
Career before provincial politics: municipal councilor, deputy mayor.
Career in provincial politics: First elected in 1999; re-elected in 2003 and 2006. Joined Liberal caucus in 2007. Served as Minister of Municipalities, Minister of Business NB, Minister of Family and Community Services, Minister of Tourism and Parks, Minister responsible for Seniors and Minister responsible for the Status of Women.

Marcelle Mersereau, Liberal
Career before provincial politics: home economist, provincial department regional director, consultant, municipal councilor.
Career in provincial politics: First elected in 1991; re-elected in 1995 and 1999; did not stand for re-election in 2003. Served as Minister of Municipalities, Culture and Housing, Minister of Environment, Minister responsible for the Status of Women, Deputy Premier, Minister of Human Resources Development and Minister of Municipalities and Housing.

Rose-May Poirier, Progressive Conservative
Career before provincial politics: insurance representative, municipal councilor.

Pierrette Ringuette, Liberal
Career before provincial politics: assistant university lecturer, manager of a Chamber of Commerce, community volunteer.

Brenda Robertson, Progressive Conservative
Career before provincial politics: home economist, university professor.
Career in provincial politics: First elected in 1967 (first woman); re-elected

**Carmel Robichaud, Liberal**  
*Career before provincial politics: teacher, vice principal, department head, part time university professor.*  
Career in provincial politics: Secretary of the local Liberal Association, president of the local Liberal Women’s Association. First elected in 2003; re-elected in 2006. Served as Minister of Family and Community Services; Minister responsible for the Status of Women, Minister of Local Government; Minister responsible for Community Non-profit Organizations and Deputy Speaker.

**Mary Schryer, Liberal**  
*Career before provincial politics: financial advisor.*  
Career in provincial politics: First elected in 2006. Served as Minister of State for Seniors, Minister of State for Housing, Minister responsible for the Status of Women, Minister of Family and Community Services, Minister of Social Development, Minister responsible for Housing and Minister of Health.

**Nancy Clark Teed, Progressive Conservative**  
*Career before provincial politics: business owner.*  

**Dr. Marilyn Trenholme Counsell, Liberal**  
*Career before provincial politics: family physician, freelance journalist.*  

**Elizabeth Weir, New Democratic Party**  
*Career before provincial politics: lawyer, university instructor.*  
**WHAT IT TAKES TO BE A WOMAN IN GOVERNMENT**

When Marilyn Trenholme-Counsell was first approached to enter politics in the 1980s, she was skeptical. One day standing on the steps of the Tribune newspaper office in Sackville it was, in part, the words of a local wealthy businessman that convinced her to run in an approaching election for the legislature in 1987. He said, “I don't know if we’re ready for a woman around here or not”.

She, along with MP Tilly O’Neill-Gordon and Miramichi Deputy Mayor Nancy Lordon spoke to a crowded room of women in Miramichi about the need for more women in politics...

Trenholme-Counsell said she isn’t surprised women feel deterred from entering politics, even if they have an interest. “Men still have the inside edge. Men have more time, much more money, more confidence. Women, for the most part, still run the household; the home tasks are not equal.”

Lordon shared the same sentiment. Once she decided to toss her name in the ring she said she faced many new challenges she didn’t expect. “I was completely overwhelmed. I had a feeling of isolation.” To aid with her transition into politics, Lordon found it helpful to have a support group...

“...I get together with two female councillors from outside Miramichi. We can talk without worrying about the politics.”

O’Neill-Gordon noted that beyond the challenges women face once they are in government, getting there in the first place can be even trickier. “Women face stereotypes and media imbalances...there is exclusion from party networks...and money. Money is the livelihood of politics.”

Trenholme-Counsell (said) not to be deterred by family obligations. “You get a good paycheck as an MP... Use that money to hire help. No one will replace you but you need help.”

- Excerpts, Why won’t women run?, Laura MacInnis, Miramichi Leader, 3 Jun 2009.
Candidates and Elected Members of the New Brunswick Legislature, 1935 – 2006

Since the creation of the province of New Brunswick, up to 2006, 27 women and about 1,054 men have been elected to serve as Members of the Legislative Assembly.

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Note: The table presents the results immediately following the general election; by-election results are not included. The general election of 1935 was the first one in which women could run as candidates.

WOMEN IN THE LAST 6 PROVINCIAL ELECTIONS

In the last six provincial general elections in New Brunswick, from 1987 to 2006, about 243 women were candidates and 50 were elected. If we consider only the three main parties, 215 of their 1,001 candidates in that period were women (21% of candidates) and 49 women were elected:

16% of the Liberal candidates were women (52 female candidates, 28 elected - which means 54% of the female Liberal candidates were successful). Meanwhile, there were 284 male candidates, 189 elected (67% success).

14% of Progressive Conservatives candidates were women (46 female candidates, 17 elected – 37% of the female PC candidates were successful). There were 290 male candidates, 90 elected, 31% success.

34% of NDP candidates were women (117 female candidates, 4 elected - the leader, Elizabeth Weir, elected in four elections. 3% of NDP female candidates were successful). There were also 212 male candidates, 0 elected.

The Confederation of Regions (COR) party ran 15 female candidates and elected one woman in that period.

These figures do not include by-elections held between 1987 and 2009, but no woman was elected through a by-election in that period.

MORE NEW BRUNSWICK WOMEN VOTE THAN MEN

In the 2006 provincial election in New Brunswick, more women turned out to vote than men:

67% of all eligible female voters voted (195,587 out of 290,177)
65% of all eligible male voters voted (173,614 out of 267,648).

This was true overall and for all age groups except seniors.
18 to 24 yr olds: 52% of females; 48% of males voted.
25 to 34 yr olds: 52% of females, 47% of males.
35 to 44 yr olds: 66% of females, 61% of males.
45 to 54 yr olds: 73% of females, 70% of males.
55 to 64 yr olds: 79% of females, 77% of males.
65 to 84 yr olds: 79% of females, 81% of males.
85 yrs and over: 62% of females, 68% of males.

- Reports of the Chief Electoral Officer, www.electionsnb.ca/publications-e.asp
WOMEN IN GOVERNMENT POSITIONS OF INFLUENCE IN NEW BRUNSWICK

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Percentage of women among:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Provincial government appointed boards, agencies and commissions, 2010 (January)</td>
<td>31%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Candidates for municipal councils in 2008 elections</td>
<td>26%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elected municipal councillors, 2010 (January)</td>
<td>28%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Candidates for mayor in 2008 elections</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elected mayors, 2010 (January)</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>First Nations band councillors, 2010 (January)</td>
<td>26%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>First Nations Chiefs, 2010 (January)</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Candidates in 2006 provincial elections</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elected MLAs, 2010 (January)</td>
<td>13%</td>
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</tbody>
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 DOESN’T IT BOTHER ANYONE?  

Anne McLellan, former Canadian deputy prime minister and minister of Justice: “Doesn’t it bother anyone that you have 54% of the population with only 20% representation? It’s not that we’re afraid to get our hands dirty. We just don’t like that culture of confrontation, ‘gotcha’ politics.” The day will come, she says, when women MPs reach critical mass, say one-third to 40%. “Then it’s, ‘Guys, this isn’t on. We have enough numbers to drown you out.’”

Flora MacDonald, who served as an MP for 16 years and held three cabinet positions: “I watch question period sometimes and thank God I’m not there... But young women need to know that this is a noble undertaking.”

- Quoted in Women Rule The Ice But They Don’t Rule The Country, Mike Strobel, Toronto Sun, 22 Feb. 2006.
New Brunswick Milestones -
Women and Electoral Politics

1919 - New Brunswick women win the right to vote in provincial elections. “The anti-suffragists in New Brunswick were beginning to look ridiculous by the spring of 1917. All the provinces west of Quebec had granted women the provincial franchise and Nova Scotia and the Dominion of Canada, with the federal franchise, were on the eve of doing so... The sudden converts to woman suffrage in the war years were seizing upon the old argument of women’s purifying strength, backed by the recent example of women’s war work... On April 15, 1919, after almost half a century of debating the issue, New Brunswick legislators granted New Brunswick women the right to vote in provincial elections. At that late hour, the suffragists had stolen from the scene, knowing that their urging was no longer needed to assure the bill’s passage.”*

1934 - New Brunswick women win the right to run as candidates for a seat in the Legislature. “After being heavily petitioned by the province’s Women’s Institutes, former anti-suffragist Premier Leonard P.D. Tilley introduces a bill which allows women to hold provincial office. All the other provinces (except Quebec where women must wait until 1940) had simultaneously granted women the vote and the right to hold office.”*

1935 - First female candidate in a provincial election in New Brunswick. Lawyer Frances Fish ran unsuccessfully for the Conservatives in the riding of Newcastle. “Frances Fish, a well-known lawyer from Newcastle... runs for the Conservatives in a strongly Liberal riding. The four Liberal candidates who run in her constituency win; it is still the period when several candidates are elected from one riding. She places a respectable first among the four losing conservative.”*

1951 - First Nations women on reserves get the right to vote and hold office on band councils. Irene Bernard was elected as councillor for the Tobique Reserve and served until 1953.

1963 - Aboriginal persons living on reserves get the right to vote in provincial elections in New Brunswick.
1967 - First woman elected to the New Brunswick Legislature. Brenda Robertson from Riverview was elected as a Progressive Conservative. “Although women were granted the right to vote in New Brunswick in 1919, they were not accorded the right to hold public office until 1934. Old attitudes die hard. It is perhaps because this is so that New Brunswick was the second last province in Canada to elect a woman to the legislature, Brenda Robertson in 1967. By this time, informal quotas (less than 10%) were being lifted on the number of women (and visible minorities) admitted to engineering, law, and medical schools in Canada. No one can tell me that quotas don’t work. Any man over the age of 50 in a position of authority or privilege is the beneficiary of an affirmative action program more rigorous than any put forward by feminist reformers who are usually willing to accept a 50-50 gender ratio... - Women in politics: old attitudes die hard, Margaret Conrad, Telegraph-Journal, 24 Jan. 2006.


1970 - First woman appointed to Cabinet in New Brunswick: Brenda Robertson as Minister of Youth.

1981 - First female leader of a political party in New Brunswick: Louise Blanchard of Caraquet was elected Leader of the Parti acadien. Her mother, Mathilda Blanchard, a union organizer, was the first New Brunswick woman to run for the leadership of a provincial party, the Progressive Conservative party, in 1967.

1991 - First woman leader of a political party elected to the New Brunswick Legislature: Elizabeth Weir, who had been elected leader of the New Brunswick New Democratic Party in 1988, won a seat in the Legislature at the provincial election.

Getting More Women Elected in New Brunswick

In 2005, the New Brunswick Advisory Council on the Status of Women held several public meetings with women on the topic of how to encourage more women to enter electoral politics. The unappealing atmosphere of political life and the need to be partisan were chief among obstacles mentioned for women’s involvement, along with women’s preference for grassroots work - seen by some to be more effective - and some women’s lack of confidence. Here is a summary of ideas received:

- Provide skills training and support through non-partisan campaign school or workshops.
- Force political parties to make a greater effort, since they receive public funds and control who gets nominations.
- Organize mentoring of women with potential within political parties, by established female party politicians.
- Set up a non-partisan search committee to approach women who should consider running.
- Release “Best Practices” reports summarizing what parties do, here and elsewhere, to elect more women, what works, and recommendations for change.
- Improve school-based content on how government works, etc.; speakers’ bureau; organize “women in politics” theme career type day to boost presence young women.

33 YEARS AFTER WOMEN COULD BE MLAS…

When Brenda Robertson was elected as the province’s first female MLA in 1967, the legislature didn’t even have a women’s washroom. When she arrived at the legislature for her first session, Robertson discovered a public washroom for women but no private facilities for females like the male MLAs had. The busloads of tourists at the legislature made it almost impossible to use the public washroom.

“If I had to go to the washroom, there was this big line up and if you were trying to debate in the chamber, it was difficult to take a fast break. Sometimes, it was faster to run over to my office in the Centennial Building,” recalls Robertson, 71, now a senator. Sometime she’d ask one of the male backbenchers to scout out the men’s private bathroom, make sure the coast was clear and then stand guard while she slipped in to use the facilities.

Some quotes from the meetings:

“Women are involved in politics, just not elected politics.”

“Women win more often than men: the success rate of female candidates in the 2004 Canadian election was 21%; men’s, 17%. The problem isn’t that women don’t get elected, it’s that they don’t get nominated.”

“I want to run someday but for now, I am concentrating on my children. I am not choosing a party now, because their policies change. When I am ready to run, I’ll look at their policies.”

“Often, men in political parties prefer a male candidate because they are not comfortable with female candidates, with advising and talking about the issues with women. It’s about their level of comfort.”

“Women’s groups could provide some of the political training for their members, about how parties work, how to become a candidate in municipal elections.”

“The major political parties do not require that both men and women sit on nominating or search committees and don’t require that a short list of potential candidates include at least one woman.”

“It will take some time before men are women enough to embrace equality.”

When I speak of gender bias in the media, I am not accusing reporters, editors or even political cartoonists of being consciously sexist in the coverage that they give to women in the political world. I don’t think that anyone begins their story thinking “how can I treat Belinda Stronach, Sheila Copps, Alexa McDonough or Kim Campbell as unfairly as possible”... It is the more insidious unconscious bias that is the problem.

We all have unconscious stereotypes that we use to frame our understanding of how women and men should behave – and of how politicians should behave. Those stereotypes that we so often hold of “women” do not map well over the stereotypes that we hold of “politicians”. As a result, women who seek elected office frequently face expectations that are very different from the expectations facing male politicians. These differences are built into our evaluations of male and female politicians and they are reflected in the media coverage that they receive. And, there is lots of evidence that the coverage that women receive is very different from the coverage that men receive...

Politics has traditionally been a male dominated field ... and political journalism has also been pretty male dominated. The result ...is that the language that is used to report on politicians and their activities tends to reinforce the image that politics is something that men do. ... Women are often left out or ignored, especially when they do not conform to traditional expectations of “political behaviour” - tough, assertive and combative behaviour. On the other hand, ... women, who adopt traditional masculine behaviours and behave combatively, often find that those behaviours are over-emphasized in the coverage that they receive. ... As a result they are likely to appear “too aggressive” and evoke criticisms of their non-stereotypical behaviour.

This is a clear case of being “Damned if you do, damned if you don’t”.

- Excerpts, Uncovering the Coverage: Gender Biases in Canadian Political Reporting, Joanna Everitt, PhD, University of New Brunswick (Saint John). Based on work conducted with Dr. Elisabeth Gidengil, McGill University. www.education-medias.ca/english/resources/educational/handouts/gender_portrayal/uncovering_coverage.cfm
What Women Can Do

Identify women you know for whom you would vote and encourage them to think about it.

If you are a member of a political party, raise the issue of fair representation of the sexes among the candidates. Approach the local riding association to ask what is their plan to increase women’s representation. Read an analysis of what needs to happen: Commission on Legislative Democracy, www.gnb.ca keyword Democracy.

Invite current or former female politicians to speak in your region about the challenges and the importance of women’s participation in politics.

Next time you have a serious or “policy” discussion with friends, workmates, parents or club members, etc., bring up the subject of how more women could be encouraged to run. Invite a local politician to meet with your group for an exchange of ideas.

Contact your MLA or visit the government website (keyword: ABC) for a list of vacancies on government appointed agencies and boards and encourage women you know to put their names forward.

Become active in a political party. Get nominated to committees and have your say in the processes.

DO:

- The Getting to the Gate online campaign school developed by Equal Voice Canada, with modules on Why Politics? When to Run? How To? http://gettingtothegate.com

LISTEN:

Recent presentations given in New Brunswick on the topic: http://gettingtothegate.coa, click on “Listen Up”:

- Women In Politics: Media, Parties And Voters - Listen to the presentation by Dr. Joanna Everitt (Feb. 2010), professor of politics and Dean of Arts at UNBSJ, whose research examines voting behaviour in Canadian elections, gender differences in public opinion and the impact of media coverage. (72 minutes. Also view the Powerpoint used during the presentation.)
- Women in Politics - What is needed for more women to enter politics (June 2009), with Marcelle Mersereau (former Minister, municipal councillor and president of N.B. Liberal Party) and Anne-Marie Gammon (Bathurst councillor and community activist). 85 minutes, in both English & French.

**VIEW:**

- Menocracy - A 2009 documentary on women and politics, by New Brunswick filmmaker Gretchen Kelbaugh. “Something’s rotten in the state of democracy”. www.menocracy.ca/

**READ:**

- Elections NB’s reports for voters, candidates and parties: www.electionsnb.ca
- Canadian Women Voters Congress, a grassroots and non-partisan organization that works for balanced political

**HOW WOMEN CAN GAIN POSITIONS OF POWER...**

Voluntary affirmative action programs alone aren’t enough to put more women in positions of power, the leader of the province’s New Democratic Party said last night. “Good will doesn’t replace a law to direct change,” Elizabeth Weir told a public meeting on women and power, organized by the New Brunswick Advisory Council on the Status of Women. She cited the example of her own party... Despite a commitment to voluntary affirmative action, women were always outnumbered on the party’s national executive. In 1982, the party proposed a change to its constitution making it mandatory that at least 50% of the executive be made up of women. The policy was adopted the following year at the party’s national convention. Within a year, that gender equality on the party’s executive became commonplace. “It just became part of how we do business. But it was an object lesson in the need for institutional change.”

STRATEGIES TO IMPROVE THE POSITION OF WOMEN WITHIN PARTIES:

• directed recruitment efforts;
• awareness campaigns directed at the external public;
• awareness efforts within the party;
• construction of better databanks on potential office holders;
• training of both male and female political activists on gender issues and political skills;
• quantitative targets for improvement.

Sometimes the actors are not the political parties themselves, but governments, or cross-party consortiums of women’s groups aiming at raising the consciousness of political actors inside parties and the general public.

of quotas” used by countries such as Spain and Norway follow the principle of balanced gender presence and apply to both men and women, limiting the dominance of either sex to a maximum of 60%. Some political parties adopt quotas: two parties in Germany have 50% quotas for women on party lists; most of Norway’s parties have a 40% minimum quota for both sexes; Sweden’s Social Democratic Party has a 50% quota, alternating men and women on its lists; Switzerland’s Social Democratic Party has a 40% quota for women on party lists.

Offer financial support to women who win party nominations. One political party has a fund that gives a few hundred dollars to female candidates to help pay for child care or other costs.

**GENDER BALANCE IN POLITICAL PARTIES**

**The Parity Parliament** (Portugal) - 115 women politicians invited 115 male colleagues to a one-day “parity parliament” (in 1994). They debated the nature of democracy, the role of women in Portugal, citizenship and parity. The event was widely covered by the press. The impact seems to have gone long beyond that one day... Today, there are illustrations of what real world parliamentary parity can be like. The Nordic parliaments and regional parliaments in Germany, Scotland or Wales have achieved almost 50% representation.

**A Five-Year Multiparty Awareness Campaign** (Iceland) - When a male prime minister becomes a poster boy acclaiming, with humour, that women may take different angles on problems, and politicians should try to put themselves in “women’s shoes”, you have an awareness campaign with a difference... The campaign in Iceland... is humorous, involves women and men across party lines and is part of a long-term strategy of cultural change... (It) was initiated by the parliament... The share of women in the Icelandic Althingi (parliament) went from 25% in 1995 to 35% after the campaign had been in operation for a year.

**The Power Book** (Swedish Social Democrats) - When Norwegian social scientist Berit Ås first sketched five techniques that made women working in gender mixed groups feel powerless, many had an “ahha” experience. The droll insights ... became a wide spread underground weapon... The Swedish social democratic women ... (expanded and) included it in their training packet... It outlines the steps that women can take as individuals and in groups ..., and raises awareness about gender dynamics so that women will be more effective once they get there...

Women and Party Differences in New Brunswick

Political scientist Sonia Pitre asked the following question to political party elites in New Brunswick:

“For each of the following explanations of why there are so few women in politics, do you strongly agree, agree, disagree, or strongly disagree:

• Women put their families above their career at the Legislative Assembly.
• Political parties do not encourage women to run.
• Women are not suited for the job.
• Because of the lack of childcare services and other structures, it is difficult to harmonize private responsibilities with political ones.
• Women have to work harder in order to have the same recognition has men.
• Women lack self-confidence.
• The rules of the political game disadvantage women.
• Party members do not want women candidates.
• Society is much more critical of the mistakes made by female than male MLAs.
• Women do not have the necessary political experience.
• Women are not interested in politics.
• Women don’t have the financial resources necessary for a nomination convention.
• Women have difficulty getting their spouse’s support.”

Sonia Pitre found that men within the parties were more inclined to maintain that women’s underrepresentation was due to a supply problem whereas women attributed it to the old boys’ network and to hostility. The perceived discrimination was greater in rural areas. Using party documents and 42 interviews with party officers, organizers and elites at the provincial and constituency levels, Pitre explored how party structure, ideology and rules determine a party’s openness to women. Her results indicate that the more institutionalized the recruitment process, the higher the level of female representation among candidates.

Pitre concludes that the party’s role in the underrepresentation of women “may be a question less of resistance to female candidates as such than of the willingness to do something about it. It may lie with the party elites’ false perception that the recruitment and selection of candidates is an entirely neutral process, which is not the case.”

FIGHT FOR POLITICAL EQUALITY FAR FROM OVER

Two female politicians whose careers took them within a whisker of the top said that people of both sexes have work to do to change Canadian politics from a boys’ club to a field where gender is no longer an issue. Anne McLellan, a former Canadian deputy prime minister, and Aldea Landry, former deputy premier of New Brunswick, told members of the Institute of Public Administration of Canada that female leaders, either as elected members or as senior bureaucrats, have yet to make up more more than about 25% of their peers.

Landry said she was among the first Acadian women elected to the N.B. legislature, but there is little evidence of a wave of women following her... Landry said she has run into a situation where the presence of women in a handful of seats is taken as evidence of equality. She said at a recent speech, a young woman asked her not to be “aggressive” in her presentation, implying that the fight for equality was completed in Landry’s generation. It’s not a victory that Landry accepts as complete. She said she still sees male domination in the corporations and organizations that control N.B. businesses and often have the ear of politicians. McLellan said she won’t accept that women have equal political clout until she sees them holding power in numbers that represent their 52% of the population.

“We’ve come a long way. The problem is we’re flatlining. Why do we settle for 25% representation for half of the population in a democracy, a free western democracy where we put a premium on equality?”

She’d like to see parties rewarded for achieving gender balance, perhaps to the extent of reimbursing some of the election expenses of parties that achieve a target level of female representation. “Gender-neutral approaches still don’t work.”

WHAT GOVERNMENTS CAN DO

Examples of actions that have improved the representation of women in elected positions:

- Electoral reform: when some form of proportional representation is adopted, generally more women are elected (See following section on Commission on Legislative Democracy).

THE “FOUR CS”

Fawcett Society, the UK’s leading campaign for equality, says political parties often fail to adequately respond to the “four Cs” - barriers encountered by women standing for election:

- “Culture” - a difficult roadblock, as it seems invisible: the culture surrounding the selection process, the confrontational style of politics as it is currently done.
- “Childcare” and other caring responsibilities - the competing demands on women.
- “Confidence” – the practical problems for women in getting elected, the image of what a politician is like, women’s socialization and limited apprenticeship, all create confidence issues for some women.
- “Cash” - the relative underinvestment in women’s campaigns by parties.

I only had one ambition as a child. I wanted to be a captain of a great ship and my father told me, ‘Only men can do that.’ Unfortunately, he didn’t live to see me president.

- Vigdis Finnbogadottir, president of Iceland, 1980 to 1996.

Balanced participation of women and men in the decision-making process is likely to give rise to different ideas, values and behaviour which will result in more justice and equality in the world for both men and women.


What Governments Can Do

Examples of actions that have improved the representation of women in elected positions:
• Women-friendly programs: child care services for example, could go a long way towards opening the doors for some women candidates.

• Parity legislation: Almost all political systems apply some kind of geographical quotas to ensure a minimum representation for densely populated areas, etc. Some countries apply quotas to ethnic, linguistic or religious minorities. Various types of quotas to ensure gender representation have been applied: reserved seats, candidate quotas and voluntary quotas applied by political parties.

The government of France adopted a law in 2000 requiring political parties to run equal numbers of female and male candidates, with penalties for non-respect – reduction of public subsidies for national elections and barring from municipal and regional elections. The penalty seems to have produced results, at least in the municipal elections: 48% of the councillors elected in 2001 were women, up from 22%. The results in the 2002 national elections were less spectacular - some parties preferred to pay the financial penalty rather than run an equal number of female candidates. In 2003, France adopted a law that required a strict balance of male and female candidates on the lists for regional and European elections. In 2007, an Act increased the penalties on parties which do not honour the parity principle for general election candidates and brings in compulsory parity for municipal and regional councils. Currently women in France are 48% of regional representatives, 44% of elected European representatives, 33% of municipal representatives and 18% of Senators.


POWer IS A GOOd THiNG

As long as it is not abused, power is a good thing for anyone who wishes to right wrongs and change society.

Learn the Rules - Much power can be lost when people do not know how decisions are made.

Half of Every Group – Women - Draw up a clear strategy for what power positions must be held by women and how women can most successfully be launched for that particular job.

Join the Election Committee - One of the most significant functions one can have.
grants to non-profit groups providing training for women interested in public office.

- Limits on electoral financing: In 2003, the federal government adopted a law on political financing which bans corporate and union donations to political parties, limits individual contributions and provides for increased public financing for political parties. Similar legislation exists in Quebec (1977) and Manitoba (2000). This helps women, as the costs of getting nominated and running an election campaign discourage many potential female candidates. New Brunswick’s Political Process Financing Act allows individuals, unions and corporations to contribute up to $6,000 a year to political parties. There are no legislated limits on contributions for nomination campaigns.

“We have to stop looking at women as if they were politically defective. Instead of blaming women for their own exclusion from politics, we have to ask why women have not been welcome, why women have chosen not to participate, and why women have come to believe that politics is too complicated for them to understand.”


New Brunswick Commission on Legislative Democracy

Excerpts from the final report of the Commission on Legislative Democracy, 2005, www.gnb.ca/0100/FinalReport-e.pdf:

The main points made by a majority of participants during Commission meetings with women:

- The electoral system needs to be changed to a form of proportional representation. The political system and culture is very adversarial, which discourages women from running.

- Politics is an “old boys club” that is uninviting to women.

- There is little effort by political parties to recruit women.

- Quotas are not the solution to electing more women.

- Financial incentives for parties to nominate women could be effective.
• There needs to be more education for young people, especially young women, if we want to change attitudes.

• Women need to organize to become more effective.

• There must be clear objectives for women’s representation in the legislature.

• Fixed election dates and fixed legislative sessions would make it easier for women to plan to seek elected office.

INSTITUTIONAL BARRIERS TO WOMEN’S REPRESENTATION

The Commission’s research shows that numerous barriers exist to women running for a party’s nomination and getting elected to the legislature. There is no grand conspiracy that keeps women out. But singly and together, each of these factors acts as a significant barrier that effectively makes it much less likely and fundamentally more difficult for women to run and get elected to the New Brunswick legislature.

The Electoral System -

There is a direct relationship between our single member plurality electoral system and electing more women. Comparisons across countries and electoral systems demonstrate clearly that countries with proportional representation electoral systems elect a greater number of women then countries that use the single member plurality system… Original academic research conducted for the Commission by Dr. Joanna Everitt of the University of New Brunswick (Saint John) and Dr. Sonia Pitre of the University of Ottawa, identified district magnitude - the number of elected positions per electoral district - as a principal reason for the low number of women elected under SMP systems. Under SMP, the parties can only nominate one member per riding and will therefore look for who they consider the candidate most likely to win. More often than not, this turns out to be a man.

By contrast, under a PR system a party can nominate more than one candidate on its party list. Accordingly, parties will almost always nominate a significant portion of women on their party lists in response to the political pressure from voters to be as representative of society as possible. Since votes are allocated under a PR system principally on the basis of the popular vote
Women in the House

A party receives, this means that more women get elected. A higher position on the list is a stronger guarantee of getting elected, and it is here that parties have often adopted internal rules for list nominations to ensure women have equitable positioning on the list... Under the Commission’s proposed New Brunswick regional mixed member proportional system, our simulations have shown that it is very likely that even a woman placing second or third on the regional list will get elected. The Commission believes that changing from the single member plurality system to our proposed regional mixed member proportional system is essential to electing more women to the New Brunswick legislature. We further believe that no significant improvement in the level of women’s representation is likely to occur in the near future under the current electoral system.

**Party Nominations**

Through the nomination process, parties are the real gatekeepers to the legislature. Women cannot get elected if they are not first nominated. Since there is no evidence that women are discriminated against in Canada by voters once they have become candidates, we must look to the party nomination process as the first and most significant barrier outside the electoral system itself. The experience of women being nominated by parties in New Brunswick tells the tale. As very few are nominated, very few are elected.

Party culture and attitude has a lot to do with whether or not women are successfully nominated. The NDP has adopted a policy of striving for equality in nominations. But as they have typically been unable to elect more than one member, it has had little effect on increasing the number of women MLAs elected.

The Commission believes that four strategies must be adopted to nominate more women:

- encouraging parties to do so through financial incentives;
- encouraging women to run by leveling the financial playing-field and making it easier for women to serve in politics;
- adopting timetables for elections and the legislature;
- educating women on how to get involved in the political process.

The Commission does not believe that party incentives should include any form of legislated or mandatory quotas or penalties... As parties receive a significant portion of their funding from the province through tax credits and
an annual allocation from the legislature, there is an obvious obligation on their part to strive to meet certain democratic goals - including the nomination of more women. Parties cannot elect women, only voters can. But parties control the nomination process and it is here that the Commission believes we must focus most.

**Financial Incentives for Parties**

The Commission believes that parties should receive additional funding through the annual allocation they are entitled to under the Political Process Financing Act if they nominate more women. Under this allocation formula, parties are entitled to an annual monetary amount for each vote they won during the previous provincial election. In 2004 this amounted to approximately $646,000 in total to the three main parties. This amount is based on a formula that is adjusted annually with the Consumer Price Index and is currently $1.73 per valid vote. This provides them with ongoing financial support from provincial taxpayers for their operations. It is an investment by the province in the democratic health and well-being of political parties as the principal vehicles for democratic expression in New Brunswick.

This funding formula has been in place for approximately 25 years. Accordingly, it is an established, effective, and publicly regulated mechanism to support political parties. The Commission believes that the most effective financial incentive for parties to nominate more women is one with which they are most familiar and has proven effectiveness. The Commission recommends that the amount per valid vote be increased by $1 for parties nominating a certain percentage of women candidates in future elections. We believe this would be a significant and effective financial incentive for political parties to nominate more women. Two eligibility thresholds for parties to receive this funding would have to apply: basically, when it kicks in and when it kicks out. The Commission’s research indicates that a critical mass in the legislature of women would be around one-third of all members. This would have a pronounced effect upon the public discourse in the province and the conduct of the legislature. The Commission therefore believes that parties must be “stretched” and should receive the additional financial incentive only if women constitute at least 35% of their candidates in a general election. With an overall goal of equality of representation in the legislature in the future, this incentive should be reviewed once the legislature’s composition reaches 45% women. The Commission believes that with these incentives in place, New Brunswick can reach an initial goal of electing women to 35% of the seats in the Legislative Assembly within three elections, or by 2015.
**Spending Limits for Nominations**

Levelling the nomination playing field will also have a positive effect on nominating more women. The Commission heard that many women do not have access to established fundraising networks. This acts as a deterrent to seeking a nomination. By setting a spending limit of approximately $5,000 for nomination contests, this will help level the playing field for women to finance a competitive nomination campaign.

**Education**

It is not enough to simply create the opportunity to participate - that opportunity must be encouraged. Many qualified women do not run for elected office because the political process is unfamiliar to them. They often do not have the contacts needed to discuss a possible candidacy. Political parties themselves may not know women who are possibly interested in running. And they may not be fully aware of the barriers and challenges within their own parties to women running for office.

There are several third-party groups in the province at the provincial, regional, or local level who could act as facilitators for women interested in entering politics. They could also help provide information to parties. The Commission believes that supporting such groups to operate in a non-partisan way, with the objective of providing information, education, and mentoring to interested women, would help create a talent pool of qualified potential candidates...

**Recommendations**

The Commission on Legislative Democracy recommends the following steps be taken with the goal of increasing the representation of women in New Brunswick's Legislative Assembly to 35% by 2015:

That amendments be made to the Political Process Financing Act as a way to achieve gender equality in the Legislative Assembly that would include an increase of the annual allowance to political parties by $1 per valid vote to any party in which women comprise at least 35% of the candidates in the preceding provincial election. This incentive would be reviewed once the New Brunswick legislature reaches a minimum of 45% women.
That an educational/policy program be created with the objective of financially supporting associations in organizing activities, providing information, or developing programs that would promote the participation of women in municipal or provincial politics.

That the Elections Act be amended to require political parties to file with Elections New Brunswick a biannual report on measures taken to increase women’s representation in the legislature. Information on the number and type of positions held by women in provincial and constituency association executives of registered political parties would be made public by Elections New Brunswick as part of its annual report to the Legislative Assembly.

That the ABC Appointments Unit be required to actively solicit applications from women for vacancies on ABCs, including using established databanks of potential female applicants.

**Women in Other Houses**

**Other Provinces**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Province</th>
<th>Percentage of female Members of the provincial Assembly, 2010</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Manitoba</td>
<td>32%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>British Columbia</td>
<td>29%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quebec</td>
<td>29%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ontario</td>
<td>27%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prince Edward Island</td>
<td>26%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nova Scotia</td>
<td>23%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saskatchewan</td>
<td>22%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Newfoundland &amp; Labrador</td>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alberta</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>New Brunswick</strong></td>
<td><strong>11%</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL (average)</td>
<td>23%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Other Countries**

Here are some of the 53 countries that are doing better than Canada in electing a balanced male-female national parliament (as of 28 February 2010). In the Canadian House of Commons, 22% of our MPs are women; in the Senate, 34% are women.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ranking</th>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Lower or single House</th>
<th>Upper House or Senate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Rwanda</td>
<td>56%</td>
<td>35%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Sweden</td>
<td>46%</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>South Africa</td>
<td>45%</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Cuba</td>
<td>43%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Iceland</td>
<td>43%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Netherlands</td>
<td>42%</td>
<td>35%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Finland</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Norway</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Mozambique</td>
<td>39%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Argentina</td>
<td>39%</td>
<td>35%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Belgium</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>41%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Denmark</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Spain</td>
<td>37%</td>
<td>31%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>New Zealand</td>
<td>34%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>Germany</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>22%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26</td>
<td>Switzerland</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>22%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27</td>
<td>Austria</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28</td>
<td>Mexico</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29</td>
<td>Tunisia</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30</td>
<td>Peru</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31</td>
<td>Portugal</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31</td>
<td>Australia</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>36%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Inter-Parliamentary Union, with information provided by National Parliaments by 28 February 2010 [www.ipu.org/wmn-e/classif.htm](http://www.ipu.org/wmn-e/classif.htm)
According to the United Nations, in order for public policy to be significantly reflective of women, women’s political representation in the lower house of a parliament must be no less than 30%.

*When there are a few women in politics, politics changes women, but when there are many women, it is politics that change...*
- Michelle Bachelet, President of Chile, 2006, as she appointed women as half of her ministers, under-secretaries and regional government officials.

The United Nations Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women scolded Canada in 2008 on the issue of Canadian women’s political presence: “The Committee notes with regret that the level of political participation by women remains low. The Committee urges the State party (Canada) to take sustained measures, including temporary special measures in accordance with article 4, paragraph 1, of the Convention and the Committee’s general recommendation 25, to accelerate an increase in the representation of women in elected and appointed bodies in all areas of public life... The Committee also notes with concern that women from ethnic and minority communities are also exposed to a high level of violence and are significantly underrepresented in political and public life... The Committee also urges the State party to ensure that aboriginal, ethnic and minority women are empowered, through encouragement, mentoring opportunities and funding, to participate in the necessary governance and legislative processes that address issues impeding their legal and substantive equality.” http://daccess-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N08/602/42/PDF/N0860242.pdf?OpenElement

*In January 2007..., the world average proportion of women members of national level legislatures stood at a mere 17.2%. This was in spite of the fact that countries around the world have recognized the underrepresentation of women in politics and started to adopt measures to help women enter politics and the national legislatures. In 1995 the Beijing Process was initiated, striving for 30 per cent women’s representation in national legislatures, 30% being seen as a ‘critical mass’ needed for women to be able to make a meaningful contribution in an otherwise male domain. Despite slight improvements during recent years, only 19 countries in the world had achieved the goal of 30+ per cent women’s representation in national parliaments by January 2007.*

Why We Need Women in Politics

1. Sound policies can hardly result from the input of only one of the two gender groups, especially given the significant differences between women and men today. Doing without significant numbers of one of the sexes impoverishes the discussion. Bad decisions result from bad or incomplete information. It’s not that women are better – it’s that balance is better.

2. Women have a marked interest in being where change is made. Women need change - that’s what the road to equality is made of – and change usually involves government action. Issues that mainly affect women - health and reproductive issues, sex equality, childcare policy, poverty, etc. – will be shortchanged if women are not there. The United Nations says at least 30% women is needed before legislatures produce public policy representing women’s concerns.

**WOMEN STILL EXCLUDED BY PARTIES - 2006**

Here are some statistics for you.

- Population of New Brunswick: 750,504
- Percentage of the population that is male: 49.4
- Percentage of candidates who are male: 79.6

...By the year 2006 one would have assumed we’d have already been through our first female premier and that a reasonable balance of representation of the sexes in the legislature would be long taken for granted. Instead, not much has changed...

Different life experiences make you think about things in different ways. If you are not a parent, you don’t think like a parent. You may not, therefore, be able to see the problems in a plan for day care, for instance, that a parent would have no trouble spotting. Thus it would make sense to have both parents and non-parents sitting in our legislature. Similarly, women have insight on topics that men do not and vice-versa...Somewhere along the line something is not working the way it should...


3. Democracy will be ineffective and the object of contempt if it does not strive for fair representation. Democracy cannot be gender-blind and must include the perspectives of all those who are affected.
4. Women’s unequal representation contravenes international conventions to which the province is bound. We could be a shameful footnote in the next report by Canada to the United Nations. A United Nations Committee recently called Canada and the provinces to task, expressing concern that in Canada “women are still underrepresented in all areas of political and public life”, and urging the introduction of “additional measures to increase the representation of women in political and public life”.

5. Women’s perspective on issues – not just on women’s issues – often differs from that of men. Women care about different issues and care differently on common issues. UNICEF says legislatures with more women produce better policies to fight child poverty, for example.

6. 90% of Canadians want more women elected, according to studies by the Centre for Research and Information on Canada. Canadians elect women candidates when given the choice.

7. Governments with more women legislators are more productive,

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**PROVINCE LACKS FEMALE CANDIDATES**

If New Brunswick were a country, we would be 100th in the world when it comes to representation of women in elected positions. Provincially, women are 13% of the Legislature. Rwanda’s national parliament has 56% women; Sweden, 47%; Argentina, 42%; Belgium, 35%. New Brunswick women have as much education and are involved in the labour force and community life as women anywhere. There’s no excuse, given that voters seem to like female candidates, when given a choice.

Can we realistically expect a substantial increase in the number of women elected in the next elections? One would think so, given that most other jurisdictions are doing better than we are, in Canada and elsewhere.

It would help if we concentrated on why we need women in politics - why it’s in our interest, as citizens, communities and parties to have equality and diversity in our elected representatives. I think the main reason is that, just as companies with more women in senior positions and boards have been found to be more successful, governments with more women and more diversity will be more effective, will better address the real priorities...

according to the World Bank. More women at the top is “vital” to finding solutions to economic turmoil, according to the World Economic Forum. “National parliaments with the largest numbers of women have the lowest levels of corruption.”

8. Companies with more women in senior management and on corporate boards are more successful, as the Conference Board of Canada has shown. Mixed teams are better than single-sex groups at solving problems. “Countries that do not fully capitalize on half of their human resources run the risk of undermining their competitive potential”.

9. Women are perhaps the most under-utilized resource, according to the Economist. Use us.

10. Women are half of the population, half of the labour force, over half of those living in poverty. Enough said.
