



Liberal Women Speaking Out and Fighting for Women's Rights

Stephen Harper said he would not re-open the debate on a woman's right to choose. But then, he allowed Conservative MP Stephen Woodworth to put forward a motion (M-312) in the House of Commons which, if passed, would take the first steps to re-criminalizing abortion. The NWLC drafted a petition to make our voices heard. We enlisted women from the Liberal women's caucus like Lucie Pepin former Senator for Shawinigan, Quebec (1997-2011) and MP, Outremont (1984-1988) to help get the word out. Her words touched our hearts:

"When I began my nursing career in the 1950s in Quebec, contraception was illegal and women had no say over family planning. They had no choice, and some faced desperation.

I saw women come to the hospital, bleeding and in pain, only to discover they'd tried to end their pregnancy themselves. As a nurse, and later as an MP and Senator, I took part in the hard-fought battles to institutionalize and enshrine the right to choose in Canadian law.

And in 1988 the debate was settled when the Supreme Court ruled: "The decision whether or not to terminate a pregnancy is essentially a moral decision and in a free and democratic society, the conscience of the individual must be paramount to that of the state."

Senator Pepin asked those who believe in preserving a Canadian woman's right to choose, to sign the petition (<http://petition.liberal.ca/abortion-debate-woodworth-harper-canada-reproductive-rights-pro-choice-lucie-pepin/>) and share it on Facebook and Twitter.

People responded in record numbers - over 100,000 signatures. The debate on the motion was a sobering reminder that Canada desperately needs more progressive women in the House of Commons to fight the Conservatives' regressive agenda. Liberals across the country took note and generously donated over \$9,000 to the Judy LaMarsh fund in the span of 3 days following the debate.

This dangerous anti-choice motion was debated in Parliament in April and was scheduled for a second round of debate on June 7 and a vote on June 13; so we all need to stay alert. One website to watch for updates is the Abortion Rights Coalition of Canada <http://www.arcc-cdac.ca/action/crush-motion-312.html>. They are reporting the second hour of debate on M-312 has been rescheduled for Sept 18, and the vote for Sept 19.

We cannot forget what is at stake here.

The most common way
people give up their power
is by thinking
they don't have any.

Alice Walker

Judy LaMarsh Fund

Determined to beat the obstacles that inhibit many women from pursuing elected office, the Judy LaMarsh Fund is the living legacy of a remarkable Liberal politician – one of the most distinguished women in Canadian history. Please help today's women candidates continue the work she began.

Donate at <https://action.liberal.ca/en/judylamarsh/>

Any questions? Want to hold a fundraising event?

Contact:

Nicole Foster Woollatt
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Monthly giving adds up

If you give \$100 a month to the Judy LaMarsh Fund (i.e. \$1200 a year) you can become recognized as a Laurier Club member.

After your end-of-year tax credit, the real cost of your donation is only \$48 a month.

See <https://action.liberal.ca/en/laurier> for details about Laurier Club status.

I KNOW WHAT I WANT AND WHAT I WANT IS MORE ... WOMEN IN POLITICS

On May 19, 2012, Arlene Perly Rae and Mary Pynenburg hosted a town hall at Hillcrest community center in Vancouver on **Women in Politics**

Equality has been part of the Canadian mantra for decades – but the work begun by our ancestors has not yet been completed:

- 1919 we gained the right to vote Federally
- 1940 in Quebec and 1960 for Aboriginal women (and men)
- 1969 contraception was decriminalized
- 1974 we gained the right to become RCMP
- 1982 all Canadians were deemed equal

Canadian Women in 2011

- 50.4% of the Canadian population (4% of us are Aboriginal, 20% of us are Immigrants)
- have never been more highly educated
- make most of the household purchasing decisions
- give birth to, and raise, the future generation sometimes alone, sometimes alone while married



Powerful but Underrepresented

Women are:

- 6% of top Canadian earners
- 17% of Canadian Corporate officers
- 21% of parliament (in 2009 we were ranked 38th with 25%)
- 37% of the management workforce
- Traded and trafficked
- Missing
- Abused
- Bullied
- Suppressed
- Our average income is 64% of that of men
- Our income is generally 70% that of men with the same level of education,
- Our income ranks less than men regardless of occupational segment
- Our hourly rate generally is 83% that of men

Ref. Unless stated otherwise, all statistics are from the 2011 Stats Canada report, Women in Canada; a Gender Based Statistical Report and The Globe And Mail

A special thank you to Margo Metcalfe, VP Organization BCWLC, for research

AWARDS

At the recent OWLC AGM in Toronto in early May, Joanne Robertson presented the Marian Maloney award to Marie Scanlon's daughter who accepted it on behalf of her

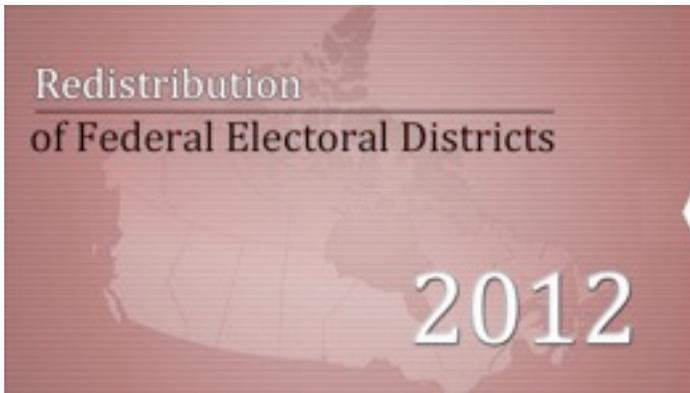


mother. Unfortunately Marie Scanlon passed away earlier this year.

Marion Maloney was a Senator, longtime Liberal and strong supporter of the Judy LaMarsh Fund.



Thank you to everyone who responded to NWLC's online survey last month on priorities for our NWLC strategic plan. We will be considering these priorities and comments as we move forward. The priorities are easy to remember if you think of M's: Money, Memberships and Messaging (i.e. fundraising, membership and supporters signups and multiplying our message in social media). Another suggestion is Muscle (i.e. recruiting volunteers). What's your **M**?



Congratulations to our Chair of Liberal Women's Caucus, Dr. Carolyn Bennett, on her 15 year anniversary as an MP for St. Paul's!

<http://carolynbennett.liberal.ca>



**WHERE TO DRAW THE LINE?
A RIDING REDISTRIBUTION UPDATE**

National Women's Liberal Commission,

Thank you for providing me space in your newsletter to bring you up to speed about the crucial democratic process now underway, called riding redistribution.

Over the past few months, my first order of business has been to prepare the Party for the coming riding redistribution. To that end, I chair the national working group on redistribution - a group made up of Liberal volunteers from coast to coast to coast.

Elections Canada redesigns the Canadian Federal electoral map after a new census is published. This process has begun and the new proposed boundaries for Newfoundland and Labrador are already available and we should see the proposals for Alberta and Nova Scotia by the end of June. We are still waiting to hear back from the other provinces as to when their proposed boundaries will be available.

As you may know, I've lived, worked and volunteered in both rural and urban ridings and I recognize the unique challenges of each. I know that these redistributions can totally change the character of a riding, split up linguistic, cultural or ethnic communities, and change a community's ability to seek effective representation.

Part of the redistribution process is consultation with the Canadian public and is open to every citizen to take part. You can follow the commissions' progress and when the public meetings are held in each province online at www.federal-redistribution.ca.

I hope you go out and get informed about what's happening in your riding and community. Discuss the potential impacts at your next riding association meeting and show up when your community is consulted.

If you have any questions or concerns about the process I'd love to hear from you and I can be contacted at chris@kcmstrategy.ca.

*Chris MacInnes
National Vice-President (English)*

CONTACT US:

Do you have an article, or photos, or notices of upcoming events about women in politics?

*Mary Pynenburg, President
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Complete contact list of the NWLC executive team from across the country:

<http://nwlc-clfn.liberal.ca/nwlc-executive/>

Find us on Facebook:

*National Women's Liberal Commission
<https://www.facebook.com/groups/2359386383/>*

GROWING THE GRASS ROOTS - ONE CLUB AT A TIME

OWEN SOUND - More than sixty women have signed up as founding members of a new Liberal Women's Commission affiliate in Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound. The founding meeting - to organize the requirements to be recognized as a Commission chapter by the Liberal Party of Canada - was held on May 17 in Owen Sound. The group expects to be ratified before summer. "It was a good night," says founding President Pat Farrar. "In order to be recognized as a chapter, we needed to have at least 25 members who supported the idea of a Women's Commission here in the riding. That our member numbers reached 61 last night was a great expression of confidence in the Commission, and enthusiasm for the Liberal message here. "Many women are dismayed by the direction of this current government," says Farrar. "As a core principle, Liberals believe in equality of opportunity. But much of the progress towards equality - made by two generations of women - is now under assault. It's time for women to re-engage in politics at the grassroots. Commissions tend to be very grassroots organizations." At the founding meeting, members cited concerns about the environment, CBC, First Nations policies, rural healthcare, food policy, childcare, the costly and ill-conceived "crime bill", and particularly the Harper government's "end runs around the democratic process" as incentives to

get involved in the Commission. In addition to the requirement for 25 members, the group needed to approve a Constitution and elect a founding Board in order to apply for status. In addition to President Pat Farrar (Owen Sound), the founding Board consists of Vice President Kathie Brown (Southgate), Secretary Janet Glasspool (Markdale), and Treasurer Kaisha Thompson (Meaford). Several additional Board positions will be filled in the coming months, says Farrar.

"This is a riding that launched some strong women politicians," says Kimberley Love, past candidate and current member of the Liberal Shadow Caucus. "We feel that this Commission is continuing the legacy of Agnes Macphail and Nellie McClung - who worked so hard for the women who would come after them. It's our turn to carry the torch here."

The group has coined the term "living Liberalism" as an informal mission statement for their activities in the riding.

"It's been thrilling to watch this Commission come together," says MaryAnne Alton, who chaired the founding meeting and has been a part of the organizing committee. "The idea for a Commission began over a casual lunch conversation with some women last autumn. We cast the idea widely, and the response was just incredible." For more information on this Liberal Women's Commission club, visit www.liberalwomen.ca



We need more women in RED like Rebecca and Kaisha from Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound (left)

REBUILDING THE NWLC ACROSS THE COUNTRY - WELCOME MORE NEW PRESIDENTS

