



*EqualVOICE
à VOIXégales*

SUBMISSION TO THE ONTARIO CITIZENS' ASSEMBLY ON
ELECTORAL REFORM

FROM EQUAL VOICE: CHANGING THE FACE OF POLITICS.

JANUARY 20, 2007

“The World Economic Forum has begun to explicitly incorporate in its measures of competitiveness aspects of gender equality, recognizing that, far from being a matter of mere political correctness, the advancement of women is an important strategic issue. Countries which do not capitalize on the full potential of one half of their societies are misallocating their human resources and compromising their competitiveness potential” – *Women’s Empowerment: Measuring the Global Gender Gap, World Economic Forum, 2005, p.2*



SUMMARY

What are Ontario women to think when looking at the huge majority of men in their provincial legislature, or dominating the candidate lists on election day?

Will they think “Oh good, I have a great bunch of men to speak for me”? Of course not.

They will ask: **“Where are the women?”**

We submit that this is the most pertinent question facing our “representative” democracy today-- and that any electoral reform that does not offer a means to elect more women, will have failed to address the concerns of half the population.

In this submission, Equal Voice is not recommending a particular voting model. We are asking the Assembly members to judge all models being considered by whether or not they are favorable to the election of more women. That will not be the only criterion, of course, but we believe that if the Assembly members keep electing women firmly in mind that will guide them to the voting system which will work best for all Ontarians.

FAIR REPRESENTATION:

“We work best when we truly represent Ontario, not just its regions but its people in all their diversity, and both male and female, because it helps us understand Ontarians, their experiences and aspirations.” *Premier Dalton McGuinty to the Legislature, June 14, 2006*

From the beginning, women have been so seriously under-represented in the Ontario Legislature as to deny them an effective voice in how their province is run. Although more than half the population, women have never achieved even a quarter of seats, and indeed in the last two decades female representation in the Ontario chamber has averaged just under 18 per cent (please see Appendix One). This is half of what the experts consider to be “substantial representation”-- not nearly enough to ensure women’s views are reflected in political decision-making.

It matters, because women want to fulfill their civic duties, and are entitled in Canadian law, to be accepted as equal partners with men in politics. It matters because however good their intentions, male Members of the Provincial Parliament cannot adequately represent their female constituents. Women’s life experiences are different from men’s, and their needs—for better childcare, elder care, health care and income support-- are greater. The public, and our political leaders, agree we must elect substantially more women, but despite the good will, the record shows fairer representation is unlikely without a woman-friendly reform of our electoral system.

THE GLASS CEILING

“What we want is so simple and so just. How can anything so sensible take so long to accomplish?” *Doris Anderson, woman’s leader, author, in her book “The Unfinished Revolution”, a study of women in 12 countries which convinced her of the importance of electoral reform. At age 85, Doris is an Equal Voice stalwart . . . and still waiting.*

Equal Voice was created five years ago precisely because women in all major political parties had lost faith that we would continue to make progress in electing more women. The momentum of the 1980s and early 1990s, when the percentage of elected women rose sharply, had stalled.

In the House of Commons, the number of women MPs has hovered around 20 per cent since 1993, and since the 2006 election is 20.8 per cent, a slight drop from the previous vote. Women make up 20.6 per cent of our Legislatures (except Quebec which has reached 30 per cent), and women are 21.7 per cent of municipal councils. A new glass ceiling is in place—women get on average one fifth of Parliamentary, legislative and municipal council seats but can’t seem to bump higher.

We think this gender gap, between female demographic representation and actual female presence in our lawmaking bodies, is the biggest “democratic deficit” in politics. Canadian society – Ontario society-- cannot afford such a loss of female talent and female perspective in our governing bodies: think of the inefficiencies of making decisions without those most affected being at the table.

Think of the cynicism women feel about the “male club”. Young women look at politics, don’t see themselves reflected there, and say that is not for me. Women are being turned off, and opting out, to the point that party nomination teams say they find it very difficult to persuade women to run.

“The more female role models that people see, that young women see in politics – people who look like them and sound like them – the better it is to try and encourage more women to get involved.” – Janet Ecker, *Former Ontario Progressive Conservative cabinet minister, to the Select Committee on Electoral Reform, Sept. 1, 2005*

EQUAL VOICE

Early on, Equal Voice adopted a four-point program for electing more women: fairer, more transparent nominations under the scrutiny of the chief elections officer; election financing reform to lower the money barrier to many women’s candidacies; the adoption of voluntary targets by political parties for increasing the numbers of women nominated; and electoral reform to introduce proportional representation. We think we need all four elements to elect substantially more women, and that electoral reform is vital to set the stage.

Our volunteer organization was, from its founding five years ago, intentionally multi-partisan, working across party lines with elected women and men, and backroom activists, from all the traditional parties. Of course, not everyone in Equal Voice agrees with all four strategies, but over the years of working together, our members have achieved a broad consensus.

Equal Voice has grown since our beginnings as a Toronto-based activist group, into a nationally-respected voice, with chapters in many parts of the country, and a national youth chapter. We maintain a bilingual website, and have mounted an on-line bilingual campaign school called Getting to the Gate, available to aspiring women in any part of the country who want to know how to form a team, raise money, and get nominated. We have raised public consciousness of women’s under-representation, and gained the ear of political leaders.

Recently, with the help of key Ontario women from all parties, we achieved a landmark : In June, 2006, the three Ontario party leaders took the Equal Voice pledge, promising to run many more women candidates in 2007.

BUT THE PROBLEM IS SYSTEMATIC.

“I would observe that good intentions are not enough that that when the rubber hits the road, all the good intentions, stated either privately behind closed doors, or publicly, don’t seem to amount to more than 22 per cent. There’s nothing systematic about it. There’s no obvious intent to exclude, but when it works out, that’s just the way it is.” *Kim Donaldson, Ontario Liberal party nominations chief, to the Select Committee on Electoral Reform, Sept. 1, 2005*

We are hopeful that Mr. Tory, Mr. Hampton and Mr. McGuinty actually will take measures to ensure more women are nominated for the Oct. 4, 2007 election. But we’ve heard such promises before and nothing has changed. As well, even if the three party leaders do deliver candidate slates with more women on them, the breakthrough might be short-lived. There is no guarantee that future leaders will do the same thing.

We think the problem is not the good intentions of the party leaders. Rather it is intrinsic to the electoral system itself. We are not talking about the way people mark their ballots. We are talking about the very entry point to politics – the nomination process.

Under our present system, we divide our country, and province, up into geographically-based ridings, and leave it up to each local party riding association to choose its candidate. We have a deeply ingrained tradition of riding autonomy. A party leader who tries to use his limited power to appoint **women** soon runs into resistance.

Just think of the hullabaloo when Jean Chrétien appointed women to certain Toronto ridings in 1993. Without his appointments, there would have been no female Liberal candidates in the whole Metro region. But he was roundly denounced within and without his party for tampering with local democracy. The then-prime minister soon abandoned appointing women. Mr. McGuinty, who as provincial Liberal leader also has the right to appoint a half dozen of his candidates, apparently took a lesson from Mr. Chrétien’s experience. As a result, the premier has used his appointment power as much for men as women.

The three Ontario party leaders are going to meet resistance to their pledges to run more women, and it will take a great deal of determination for them to overcome it. Already, there has been backlash – in ridings and in the media – against Liberal party attempts to reserve some ridings in 2007 for women candidates.

All three leaders will run into accusations that special measures to elect women turn female MPPs into “tokens”. Or the leaders will be accused of “social engineering”. They may start saying the things we have heard so often: that women don’t really enjoy political life. In Equal Voice we are concerned that without changing the status quo – our single-member, riding-based electoral system – Ontarian women cannot count on achieving fairer representation in the foreseeable future.

THE STATUS QUO IS NOT AN OPTION

“I don’t think we can really say that we have achieved what we set out to do with important laws like the Charter of Rights and other human rights legislation when the body which makes laws in Ontario so under-represents women.” — *Progressive Conservative leader John Tory to the Legislature June 14, 2006*

Other presenters to the Citizen’s Assembly may tell you that Equal Voice is wrong in its prescription – that the “woman question” cannot or should not, be approached through electoral reform. For these critics, electing more women should be dealt with by incentives, or quotas, and should not be a shaping factor in deciding the voting model. Other values (such as preserving local accountability of MPPs to their voters); trump the principle of fair representation.

If this is deemed an over-riding concern--that geographically-based representation is the most-important value--then we will get a reformed electoral system based on small ridings or districts. For women, that will mean very much the same results as under our present system. More women won’t be elected as long as the choice of who gets on the ballots is left up to the decision-makers in small geographically-based fiefdoms.

The face of our legislature will remain much the same, and will not represent the actual makeup of the population, not just the half who are women, but women and men in all their diversity, including the many groups – first nations, visible minorities, aboriginals - now largely excluded from politics.

THE RIGHT KIND OF REFORM

“When we look around the world, we notice that those jurisdictions that have proportional representation elect far more women.” — *New Democrat leader Howard Hampton, to the Legislature June 14, 2006*

Opening the doors requires not just reform, but the right kind of reform. As we’ve said above, Equal Voice believes the key to electing more women is to change the way nominations are conducted. We know from past elections that women, once nominated, are as likely to be elected as male candidates. Given a chance to do so, electors apparently are as happy to choose a woman as a man. But they don’t get that choice if women’s names are not on the ballot. In the last Ontario election, some 25 per cent of candidates were women, which is a slight improvement on the recent norm in Canadian elections of about 22 per cent. The foolproof way to increase the number of women elected is to increase the numbers being nominated.

The way to do that, we believe, is by putting the spotlight on the gender balance of party candidate slates. In our present system that is not possible until it is almost too late. Candidates are selected at local nomination meetings, where delegates choose the most “winnable” of the nominees. Most of the time they deem a white male

professional to be that “winnable” choice. A familiar pattern develops: at the last minute party headquarters wakes up to the fact that few women are being nominated and there is a panic to get more women on the slate.

The NDP, which requires riding associations to prove they’ve made a genuine effort to find women or minority candidates, does best. In the 2003 election, 33 per cent of New Democrat candidates were women; 22 per cent of Liberal candidates were women, and 20 per cent of Progressive Conservative candidates. But we couldn’t know that not enough women were being chosen until after nominations closed.

Equal Voice has seen this happen in federal and provincial elections. We believe the Citizen’s Assembly should NOT recommend retaining our present first-past-the-post system because it fails on many fronts, and in particular fails to substantially represent the female majority of Ontario’s citizens.

PUTTING THE SPOTLIGHT ON CANDIDATE SELECTION

“If you look at all the possible reasons why there would be more women in one Legislature than another – you look at culture, you look at socio-economic status, you look at the place of certain parties of particular ideological stripes, and so on – the biggest single reason there are more women in some national parliaments than there are in others is the electoral system used to choose those legislators – the single biggest!” *Dr. Heather MacIvor, University of Windsor, to the Ontario Select Committee on Electoral Reform, Aug. 31, 2005*

Other countries, which use systems of proportional representation, achieve a better result. Typically, countries do best which employ “List PR”. (Please see Appendix 2) Parties put up lists of whom they would like to elect across a region. The selection of candidates for the list may be done by party leaders, or preferably, at a nominating convention. Since all-white-male candidate lists would reflect badly on a party, and hurt its electoral chances, lists are typically balanced to include women and minority candidates.

This system, which provides a chance for public scrutiny of candidate lists, encourages parties to reach out to women and candidates from diverse backgrounds. Of course, bigger regions and longer lists are most effective in producing this result. “Infection” sets in and parties start competing to be truly representative, sometimes by adopting voluntary party targets for male-female representation. Finland elects 38 per cent women by using List-PR with long lists, and has found no need for quotas or special measures of any kind. In Sweden, the left parties have introduced their own quotas, and one party has “zippered” its lists, man-woman, man-woman. Sweden has achieved 47.3 per cent female representation.

Good results for women have also been achieved in countries using a “Mixed” system, combining a majority of seats elected locally with a minority of List-PR seats. Zealand and Germany are the examples of “mixed” systems usually cited, and both elect about 32 per cent women. New Zealand’s PR seats are elected from lists that are nation-side.

We would ask the Citizens' Assembly to look at the effect that lists have had in encouraging more representative slates of candidates in the countries that do best at electing women. Please bear in mind that longer lists (the experts say 7 seats is a minimum) are key in encouraging publicity-minded parties to balance their lists and include more women and minority candidates.

Whatever system you choose, whether a "pure" PR system, or "mixed", we urge you to adopt at least an element of large List-PR, because of its proven record of electing more women.

MORE REPRESENTATIVE GOVERNMENT:

"The opportunity here for democratic renewal in the province of Ontario is very exciting to us . . . I think of the culture, of how issues are brought forward, how consensus is arrived at and what focus is given . We would have a very different reflection of views from women that is important and is just currently missing."

Frances Lankin, former Ontario cabinet minister to the Select Committee on Electoral Reform, Sept. 1, 2005.

Politics in Canada, and in Ontario, is often described as a "male club". We believe a reform that includes at least an element of Proportional Representation will be like a fresh breeze blowing into that fusty Legislative Chamber. For a start, electoral reform will unplug the dam of majority white-male-professional incumbency. Just think of the difference if a third-- then a half-- of Ontario's legislators were women-- in all their diversity!

We know from what has happened elsewhere that the style would be more consensual, and there would be more emphasis on issues of importance to women. (In Ontario, the polls show more support among women than men for stronger social programs and environmental protection.)

Opening the doors to the election of more women could also prove a partial answer to voter apathy and low voter turnout. One of the advantages of PR is a typically greater turnout (70-90 per cent) because voters have a greater number of choices, and from more perspectives, including those coming from more women and minorities elected. There is some evidence, admittedly scanty, being compiled by the International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance, that the percent of women going out to vote is rising in Scandanavian countries where women play leading roles in politics.

Despite the lack of statistical evidence, it would seem just common sense to assume that we turn women voters off by a system that requires women, in the words of former Ottawa major Charlotte Whitton to be "twice as good as men" in order to succeed. Cynicism rises when women watch female politicians being hazed by the media or being subjected to sexist and demeaning treatment.

The best cure for this unhealthy atmosphere is to boost female representation so that elected women are seen as partners not as exceptions to the rule.

MORE EFFECTIVE GOVERNMENT

“If I have 500 partners, and only 100 are women, 150 of my partners are relatively unqualified,” – *Michael Cook, chairman of Deloitte and Touche.*

This issue is not **just** about “fairness” for women, or about the “unfinished revolution”, (although achieving substantive political representation for women is a key goal of the modern women’s movement). This is about a better electoral system for men too. We argue that male voters also have a stake in electing more women. That’s because the payoff of proportional representation will be a better-functioning political system.

As things stand, we draw most of our elected politicians from a half, or less, of the potential talent pool. If we assume all parts of the talent pool are equally qualified, then we are not only passing up the chance to elect talented women, we are electing some men less capable than the missing women. If we apply Mr. Cook’s simple math to the Ontario Legislature, with 103 seats filled by 78 men and 25 women, some 26 of the men are “relatively unqualified”.

This is an amusing and not-very--serious way to make the point. Others around the world are also making it, as the costs of gender inequity become increasingly obvious. In its April 15, 2006 issue, *The Economist*, in an essay entitled “A Guide to Womenomics”, said “Women remain perhaps the world’s most under-utilized resource.” The conservative business magazine quoted a World Economic Forum finding that there is a clear correlation between sexual equality and a country’s GDP.

“Making better use of women’s skills is not just a matter of fairness,” said the *Economist*. “A recent study by Catalyst, a consultancy, found that American companies with more women in senior management jobs earned a higher return on equity than those with fewer women at the top. This might be because mixed teams of men and women are better than single-sex groups at solving problems and spotting external threats.”

We shouldn’t have to look to the business world for this lesson that involving both sexes – and under-represented minorities-- will improve our law-making. Our Legislature and Government will be more efficient, because more of those affected will be part of the decision-making. There will be less need for lobby groups for the under-represented coming cap-in-hand to persuade politicians to amend what they got wrong the first time.

KEEPING UP WITH MODERN DEMOCRACIES

“Perhaps the most universally persuasive argument is that the representation of women, in all their diversity, confers legitimacy on the entire political system. By implication, everybody – whether feminist or not, and whether left-leaning or right-leaning – has a stake in a rise toward gender parity in electoral politics” – *Political scientist Louise Carbert, presentation to the Canadian Political Science Association, York University, June, 2, 2006.*

In the highly-competitive early years of the 21st Century, Canada, and its largest province, is falling behind other countries which are more fully including women in their political life. Recently Canada dropped to 47th in the international rankings of countries by the Inter-Parliamentary Union according to the numbers of women elected to their national legislatures.

We realize that in many others aspects – in terms of personal freedom and economic status-- Canadian women are privileged compared to women in some of the emerging countries which ranked higher on the political participation scale. Still when it comes to political opportunity, a seat in the highest councils in the land, Canadian women, even in relatively rich and urbanized Ontario, are lagging behind their sisters.

Falling behind in electing women is a North American anomaly. Women in the United States Congress are only 16 per cent of representatives and senators--66th in the rankings. Or, more accurately, it is a phenomenon in a few former British colonies which are still clinging to the Westminster model of first-past-the-post local member representation. (The United Kingdom ranks 52nd, India 107th).

We in Ontario have an opportunity now to break the old colonial mold. An electoral reform in Ontario which encourages women to run for political office is likely to set off a chain reaction across the country. Other provinces, even the federal government, are looking at their electoral systems, or rumbling about it, but so far none has made electing more women a priority. If the Citizens’ Assembly recommends a women-friendly reform, and Ontarians vote in favor this October, Ontario could be the first Canadian jurisdiction with substantial representation of women in its politics.

We think having a third or more women in the Legislature would help the majority of the population – Ontario’s women--to feel fairly represented in the elected body that makes so many decisions affecting their lives. Like men, women come in all stripes and differing capacities, so we don’t want to make extravagant claims. With that reservation, we believe that for all Ontarians, more elected women will mean more effective government, and an improved performance by our politicians.

On behalf of Equal Voice:

Dr. Rosemary Speirs, Founder, Past-Chair,

Raylene Lang-Dion, National Chair

Dr. Donna Dasko, Vice-Chair, Chair of Founders' Chapter

Louisa Moya, National Youth Chair

Mehreen Raza, Toronto Chapter Chair

Chantal Courchesne, National Capital Region Chapter Chair

Beki Scott, Toronto Youth Chapter,

Marilyn Churley, former New Democrat MPP, EV Founders' Chapter

Janet Ecker, former Conservative finance minister of Ontario, EV Founders' Chapter

Helen Burstyn, Member, Founders Chapter

APPENDIX ONE

Women MPPs at Queen's Park, 1981 through 2006

(Graphs prepared by Graham Murray, G.P. Murray Research Ltd, for Equal Voice.
Please do not use without crediting G.P. Murray Research)

SCOPE - The following tables show the number and percentage of women who were nominated in the seven provincial elections fought during the period 1981 through 2003 (*Tables 1 through 7*) as well as in provincial by-elections from 2003 to 2006 (*Table 8*). Totals are given for each of the three major parties represented at Queen's Park. The numbers of women elected are represented as percentages of each party caucus as well as of the legislature as a whole.

The (*Table 8*) by-election figures have been added to the 2003 results (*Table 7*) to produce a current total (*Table 9*).

| <i>Table 1</i> 1981 (125 seats) | Female Candidates # | Female Candidates % | Women Elected # | Women Elected % |
|---------------------------------------|------------------------|------------------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| PC | 13 | 10.4 | 4 / 70 | 5.7 |
| LIB | 8 | 6.4 | 1 / 34 | 2.9 |
| NDP | 20 | 16.0 | 1 / 21 | 4.8 |
| Total | 41 / 375 | 10.9 | 6 / 125 | 4.8 |

| <i>Table 2</i> 1985 (15 seats) | Female Candidates # | Female Candidates % | Women Elected # | Women Elected % |
|--|------------------------|------------------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| PC | 17 | 13.6 | 2 / 52 | 3.8 |
| LIB | 14 | 11.2 | 2 / 48 | 4.2 |
| NDP | 27 | 21.6 | 3 / 25 | 12.0 |
| Total | 58 / 375 | 15.5 | 7 / 125 | 5.6 |

| <i>Table 3</i> 1987 (seats 130) | Female Candidates # | Female Candidates % | Women Elected # | Women Elected % |
|--|------------------------|------------------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| PC | 22 | 16.9 | 2 / 16 | 6.2 |
| LIB | 27 | 20.8 | 15 / 95 | 15.8 |
| NDP | 46 | 35.4 | 3 / 19 | 15.8 |
| Total | 95 / 390 | 24.3 | 20 / 130 | 15.4 |

| <i>Table 4</i> 1990 (seats 130) | Female Candidates # | Female Candidates % | Women Elected # | Women Elected % |
|--|------------------------|------------------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| PC | 19 | 14.6 | 3 / 20 | 15.0 |
| LIB | 26 | 20.0 | 6 / 36 | 16.7 |
| NDP | 40 | 30.8 | 19 / 74 | 25.7 |
| Total | 85 / 390 | 21.8 | 28 / 130 | 16.6 |

| <i>Table 5</i> 1995 (seats 130) | Female Candidates # | Female Candidates % | Women Elected # | Women Elected % |
|--|------------------------|------------------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| PC | 20 | 15.4 | 11 / 82 | 13.4 |
| LIB | 31 | 23.8 | 4 / 30 | 13.3 |
| NDP | 38 | 22.8 | 4 / 17 | 23.5 |
| Total | 89 / 390 | 22.8 | 19 / 130 | 14.6 |

| <i>Table 6</i> 1999 (seats 103) | Female Candidates # | Female Candidates % | Women Elected # | Women Elected % |
|--|------------------------|------------------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| PC | 18 | 17.5 | 9 / 59 | 15.2 |
| LIB | 19 | 18.4 | 6 / 35 | 17.1 |
| NDP | 32 | 31.1 | 3 / 9 | 33.3 |
| Total | 69 / 309 | 22.3 | 18 / 103 | 17.5 |

| <i>Table 7</i> 2003 (seats 103) | Female Candidates # | Female Candidates % | Women Elected # | Women Elected % |
|--|------------------------|------------------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| PC | 21 | 20.3 | 3 / 24 | 12.5 |
| LIB | 23 | 22.3 | 17 / 72 | 23.6 |
| NDP | 34 | 33.0 | 2 / 7 | 28.6 |
| Total | 78 / 309 | 25.2 | 22 / 103 | 21.3 |

| <i>Table 8</i> Post-2003 by- elections [seats = 7] | Women Elected # | Women Elected % |
|--|--------------------|--------------------|
| PC | 2 / 7 | 28.6 |
| LIB | 0 / 7 | 0.0 |
| NDP | 2 / 7 | 28.6 |
| Total | 4 / 21 | 19.0 |

| <i>Table 9</i> Female MPPs as at 09/2006* | Women Elected # | Women Elected % |
|---|-----------------------|--------------------|
| PC | 5 / 24 | 20.8 |
| LIB | 17 / 70 | 24.3 |
| NDP | 3 / 9 | 33.3 |
| Total | 25 / 103 | 24.3 |

* Note that three more by-elections are expected prior to the 2007 general election.

APPENDIX TWO:

| Countries that elect more than 30 % women | Electoral System | Quotas (voluntary or legislated) | Seats in lower house, number held by women | Percent women |
|---|---------------------------------|---|--|---------------|
| Rwanda | List PR | 24 seats reserved for women elected by women only | 80 seats; 39 held by women | 48.8 per cent |
| Sweden | Semi-open List PR | Three left parties have 50 % quotas for women on lists. Labour Party (SAP) zippers list | 349 seats ; 165 women | 47.3 per cent |
| Costa Rica | Closed List PR | 40 per cent legislated quota | 57 seats; 22 held by women | 38.6 per cent |
| Finland | Open List PR | No quotas | 200 seats; 76 women | 38 per cent |
| Norway | List PR | Political party quotas | 169 seats, 64 women | 37.7 per cent |
| Denmark | Semi-open List PR | Party quotas ended in 1996 | 179 seats, 66 women | 36.9 per cent |
| Netherlands | List PR | Left party quotas | 150 seats;55 women | 36.7 per cent |
| Cuba | One party (Communist) elections | One candidate per riding chosen by grassroots groups including women's | 609 seats, 219 women | 36 per cent |
| Spain | List PR | Labour party quota; legislated next time | 350 seats;126 women | 36 per cent |
| Argentina | List PR | Legislated quota | 257 seats, 90 women | 35 per cent |

| | | | | |
|--------------------|---------------------------|------------------------------|----------------------|---------------|
| Mozambique | List PR | Legislated quota | 250 seats, 87 women | 34.8 per cent |
| Belgium | List PR | Legislated quota | 150 seats, 52 women | 34.7 per cent |
| Iceland | List PR | Left party quotas | 63 seats, 21 women | 33.3 per cent |
| South Africa | List PR | ANC Party quota | 400 seats, 131 women | 32.8 per cent |
| Austria | List PR | Party quota | 183 seats;59 women | 32.2 per cent |
| New Zealand | Mixed Member Proportional | No quotas. Country-wide list | 121 seats, 39 women | 32.2 per cent |
| Germany | MMP | Party quota | 614 seats, 194 women | 31.6 per cent |
| Burundi | List PR | Legal quota | 118 seats, 36 women | 30.5 per cent |

Research by Wilfred Day, Equal Voice member, from the Inter-Parliamentary Union website www.ipu.org/wmn-e/classif.htm , and from The Global Database of Quotas for Women, www.quotaproject.org/country.cfm

(Note: Two other interesting jurisdictions with good results, Wales and Scotland, both with “devolved” assemblies but not full nation status, boast 50 per cent and 38 per cent female representation respectively. Under their “mixed” systems, labour parties boosted the results for women by “twinning” ridings and requiring them to elect one man and one woman. Affirmative action (they call it “positive discrimination”) was dropped after the first elections in 1999, but despite that, in the second elections in 2003, the numbers of women rose, with female candidates doing well in the riding seats as well as the PR seats. However, a recent article in the Scotsman quoted women Members as saying support for gender balance is waning and they fear losses unless fresh action is taken.)

| Selected Low ranking countries | Electoral System | Quotas, Legislated or Voluntary | Number of seats; women elected | Percent Women |
|--------------------------------|------------------|---------------------------------|--------------------------------|---------------|
| (47) Canada | FPTP | None | 308 seats;64 women | 20.8 per cent |
| (52) United Kingdom | FPTP | None | 848 seats;127 women | 19.7 per cent |
| (66) United States of America | FPTP | None | 431 seats;70 women | 16.2 per cent |
| (80) Ireland | STV | None | 166 seats; 22 women | 13.3 per cent |
| (100) Malta | STV | None | 65 seats; 6 women | 9.2 per cent |

Appendix Two Research by Wilfred Day, Equal Voice member, from the Inter-Parliamentary Union website www.ipu.org/wmn-e/classif.htm , and from The Global Database of Quotas for Women, www.quotaproject.org/country.cfm