

THE HONOURABLE CAROLINE COCHRANE
18(3)
MINISTER RESPONSIBLE FOR THE STATUS
OF WOMEN

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Campaign School for Women

Mr. Speaker, today there are increasing numbers of women leaders who are working at the local or regional level for the betterment of our communities. But only a handful of women have ever taken seats in this Legislative Assembly.

Mr. Speaker, it's time to change that. Our governing bodies should be representative of the populations they serve, and women make up half of our population. We need more women in political leadership at all levels, but especially here in this House.

We are seeing progress. The municipal elections in the fall of 2018 saw several women being elected into positions as mayors and councilors throughout the territory. Several of the successful candidates represent a younger demographic, and that's great news for the future of our territory.

Mr. Speaker, these women candidates succeeded with support from family, friends, donors and campaign workers, but it all starts with the women themselves. Each woman who puts her name forward inspires women throughout the Northwest Territories to run for office,

whether it is for the local education authority, a municipal council, an Indigenous government, the Legislative Assembly or the Parliament of Canada.

The results of the municipal elections last year show that northerners do see women as leaders who belong in the political realm. Better yet, more and more women see themselves as leaders.

Mr. Speaker, every Member of this House has been concerned about the low numbers of women in leadership, especially on boards and agencies and in political leadership at the territorial level. The Mandate of the 18th Legislative Assembly committed our government to improving gender equity on boards and agencies and to taking steps to increase the participation of women in politics.

The GNWT has sponsored Campaign Schools for Women over the term of this Assembly. Some of the successful municipal candidates last year were past participants of these workshops. We have also developed a “made in the north” curriculum to support these workshops.

In developing this training material, we sought and received input from women across the NWT, and the training material is designed to apply to any elected position. I want to extend my heartfelt appreciation to the Native Women’s Association of the NWT and the Status of Women Council of the NWT who worked with us to pilot this training material.

I am also happy to report that a communications campaign has been designed to help increase the number of women seeking political office by reinforcing the message that women are capable leaders. Phase One of the campaign was launched this month, and it will run until nominations for the Territorial election close in the first week of September. Phase Two will run from October 24th to November 15th, leading up to the municipal elections in nine communities.

Mr. Speaker, I am proud of the support that this government has provided to women in an effort to increase their representation in the Legislative Assembly. This House established the Special Committee to Increase the Representation of Women in the Legislative Assembly and unanimously supported each of the recommendations made in the final report. I was also pleased to provide funding for a very successful initiative led by the Member for Yellowknife Centre and the Yellowknife Women's Society, who offered a series of workshops and networking opportunities to prepare women to run for the Legislative Assembly.

We see evidence of the positive impact of our work in the number of women who have already announced that they will put their names forward in the upcoming NWT election. All of us in this Assembly, both women and men, have done our part to promote women in elected positions during our term and to fulfill our Mandate commitments.

Mr. Speaker, I have more good news. We are not alone in our quest for gender equity in political life. The Government of Canada is stepping up as well. On August 8th, I was with

the Member of Parliament for the Northwest Territories, Michael McLeod, to announce new funding for our government from the Government of Canada. On behalf of the Honourable Maryam Monsef, Minister of Women and Gender Equality, MP McLeod announced \$525,000 in new funding to bolster our own investment in women's leadership initiatives.

This funding will be used to create a new online portal for the Campaign School for Women that will allow us to reach more residents, more often. It will help us continue pilot-testing the new "made in the north" Campaign School curriculum with additional workshops throughout the NWT, and it will help us continue our communications campaign to encourage women to enter politics at all levels.

Mr. Speaker, I am happy to report that the Mandate commitments of the Government of the Northwest Territories to support the delivery of workshops that help to get women into politics and to support a communications campaign to increase the participation of women in politics have been achieved. But our work is not yet done. It must continue until women are equally represented at all levels of elected leadership.

Mr. Speaker, this government has worked very hard to increase the number of women in politics. I would like to thank all the inspiring women who have decided to run in the upcoming territorial elections. It's time for women to take their seats at the table – and in this House. This territory wants more women leaders, we need their talents at all levels, and we will make it happen.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.