



NATIONAL BALLOT FOR WOMEN'S EQUALITY

NATIONAL ACTION COMMITTEE ON THE STATUS OF WOMEN (NAC)

March 28, 1996

Dear friend,

Some people say women have achieved everything we need.

They say you and I no longer need to raise our voices for social and economic justice, reproductive rights, child care, equal pay, or an end to poverty, discrimination, violence and harassment.

But the story I'm hearing is a very different one.

Every day, women from many different backgrounds come up to me on the street or phone us at the office to say how glad they are that NAC is there to represent them. Especially now, when the government is making decisions that affect our lives so drastically.

That's why I'm writing to you today. For too long, you and I have been listening to critics telling us the women's movement should stop fighting for equality.

Well, now it's your turn to have a say.

In the face of this anti-feminist backlash, NAC is circulating a NATIONAL BALLOT FOR WOMEN'S EQUALITY nationwide. Your ballot is enclosed.

The ballot asks what you think. Should NAC keep fighting for social and economic justice? Should we wage our fight nationally and internationally? Or should we do what our critics say – demand less and be content with what we get?

I hope you'll take a moment now, while you've got this ballot in front of you, to mark your response.

Your ballot, part of our new Campaign for Women's Equality, will be tabulated along with thousands of others. The results will be delivered to Prime Minister Jean Chrétien and Finance Minister Paul Martin, who are working right now to cut back the social programs that women need.

please turn over...

The results will also be delivered to Sheila Finestone, the Minister Responsible for the Status of Women, who over the next year is reviewing the financial support the government gives to all national women's organizations. We at NAC are gravely concerned that this review may lead to cutbacks to these organizations - including NAC itself - or even the wholesale dismantling of them.

So when you send us your ballot, please also enclose the most generous contribution you can to NAC.

By voting now and sending in your contribution, you'll show whether you think the fight for women's equality is over -

- At a time when the Liberals are preparing historically unprecedented cuts to Medicare, post-secondary education, welfare and unemployment insurance - cuts that will hurt women dreadfully...
- At a time when women are harassed and intimidated with violence in front of abortion clinics, pro-choice doctors are shot in their homes, and many women still don't have access to clinics because of lack of facilities...
- At a time when violence against women is rampant, when three women are killed every week by a male spouse or boyfriend...
- At a time when almost half of all single women over the age of 65 are poor, where 60% of single mothers are raising their children in poverty, and when women still earn less than men doing the same jobs...
- At a time when immigrants are forced to pay a racist head tax, lesbians are faced with a dramatic increase in homophobic violence, aboriginal women die years earlier than other women...

We must wage a national campaign to fight back for women's reproductive and economic rights, and for equality and justice for all our sisters.

next page, please ...

With the swing to power of the Klein government in Alberta and the election of Mike Harris in Ontario, we no longer have to look south of the border to find governments passing laws which throw single mothers off welfare, repeal abortion rights and reverse employment equity legislation.

The backlash is so powerful that even politicians and parties that once claimed to support women's rights are now changing their tune.

The Liberal government, elected with promises of nationwide child care and many other commitments on policies affecting women, is now busy cutting the most basic social programs – programs that provide women with medical care, education, housing and a way to feed their children and themselves.

The government has also cut back funding for rape crisis centres and shelters for women who experience domestic abuse. And recently it completely dismantled the Canadian Advisory Committee on the Status of Women, the Crown committee set up to advise and monitor the impact of government policies on women.

For all these reasons, your support is crucial.

When you fill out your ballot, I hope you will also make a donation of \$35, \$50, \$75, or whatever you can afford to NAC.

Please also consider joining NAC's Action Fund, a group of people who've dedicated a small, monthly amount of \$10, \$15, or \$25 to fight for women's rights all year round.

But however you decide to contribute, you'll help us keep challenging the government at a time when Paul Martin's cutbacks pose the largest setback to women's economic and social equality in recent history.

And you will know that all of us at NAC deeply appreciate your generous support because **with our own funding cut back so much by the government, we rely on your support to succeed.**

As a progressive person, I know you believe in the women's movement, in its history and victories.

But as our grandmothers and mothers will tell us, the gains women have made aren't won once, for all time. They're won again and again every day, because groups like NAC are vigilant and keep insisting on defending them.

please turn over...

And just as feminists today are reviled by some media and politicians, so throughout history women have been ridiculed and told to "back off and accept what you've got."

But you and I know something they don't. Together we can move mountains. With your financial support I believe we can and will win again, that we will build on the victories of past generations and chart a new and exciting direction for feminism in the future.

So take up your pen when you're done reading this letter, send your contribution and mark your vote for women's equality, for NAC, and for a just and equal society for all.

Sincerely,

Sunera Thobani

Sunera Thobani

President

P.S. I hope you'll help NAC continue to fight for women's equality by voting "Yes" and sending a generous donation today. Please display the free "I support NAC" decal I've enclosed for you. It will let others know you stand behind the National Action Committee on the Status of Women.



NATIONAL BALLOT FOR WOMEN'S EQUALITY

NATIONAL ACTION COMMITTEE ON THE STATUS OF WOMEN (NAC)

Your ballot is part of the National Action Committee on the Status of Women's Campaign for Social Justice and Equality. All ballots will be delivered to Prime Minister Jean Chrétien and Finance Minister Paul Martin to show women are as determined as ever to fight for equality.

The results will also be delivered to Sheila Finestone, the Minister Responsible for the Status of Women, who over the next year is reviewing the support the government gives to all national women's organizations.

Should NAC keep working for social justice and equality for women? (Mark your choice)

☐ **YES...**

I believe the role of NAC is more important than ever to fight for women's equality, reproductive rights, child care, equal pay, and freedom from violence, harassment, and racial and sexual discrimination.

☐ **NO...**

I believe that the goals of the women's movement have been substantially achieved. Canada no longer needs the National Action Committee on the Status of Women.

Signature

Full Name (Please Print)

Address

City

Province

Postal Code

DO NOT DETACH (PLEASE RETURN TO NAC)

YES! I'LL SUPPORT NAC!

I'll become a supporter of NAC and help Canada's national women's organization keep fighting for women's equality.

Enclosed is my contribution of:

☐ \$35 ☐ \$50 ☐ \$60 ☐ \$75 ☐ \$100

☐ \$150 ☐ \$200 ☐ Other \$ _____

* by giving \$75 or more, you'll get a Barbara Klunder T-shirt.

☐ I'll pay by cheque

OR

☐ VISA ☐ MasterCard

Card Number: _____ Exp. Date: ____/____

Signature: _____

PROCESSING FEE

☐ I cannot make a contribution to NAC right now. Enclosed is a processing fee of \$4.50 to help cover the costs of tabulating and delivering my ballot.

ACTION FUND

Action Fund members pledge an ongoing **monthly** amount to help NAC. I/We authorize NAC to draw on my chequing account the amount of:

☐ \$10 ☐ \$15 ☐ \$20 ☐ \$30 ☐ Other \$ _____

☐ I've enclosed my first month's cheque, marked "void", to start monthly deductions

OR

I will make my monthly contributions through:

☐ VISA ☐ MasterCard

Card Number: _____ Exp. Date: ____/____

Signature: _____

☐ I've joined the ACTION FUND or given \$75 or more. Please send me my Barbara Klunder T-shirt in ____ large, ____ extra large, ____ supsize (please check one).

