

Source: Season 2, Episode 6

Canada's Gender Gap with Shari Graydon

Episode Highlights

Canada ranks [61st in the world](#) for women's political representation (as of August 2023). So, what needs to happen for women to achieve parity in politics?

This Gender Equality Week, join Heidi Yetman, CTF/FCE President, for a conversation about women's political representation in Canada with Shari Graydon of Informed Opinions.

This episode discusses:

- The *Balance of Power* campaign;
- The gender gap in Canada and around the world;
- Measures other countries are taking to ensure a balance of power in politics;
- Importance and benefits of gender parity in politics;
- And more.

What is *Informed Opinions*? What is the purpose of the *Balance of Power* campaign?

Shari Graydon (SG): Informed Opinions is a national charitable feminist organization that works to amplify the voices of women and gender diverse people for a more democratic Canada. Through our research, we discovered that the majority of men and women being quoted most often in Canadian media are elected officials. This is when we realized that we can't achieve our mandate until women achieve parity in politics. And so, we launched the *Balance of Power* campaign, which highlights the inequity in our political spaces and works to ensure every voice gets a fair chance to shape the future.

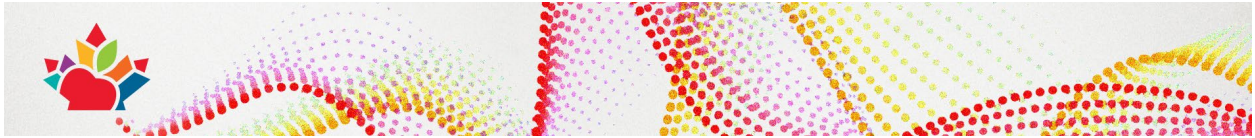
What is the gender gap in political representation in and across Canada?

SG: We accept that representation is important. That's why Quebec has 22% of the population and 22% of the seats. Women make up 50% of the Canadian population and deserve 50% of the seats. However, at the federal level, women make up 30.5%. There is quite a big gap from province to province: Saskatchewan and Newfoundland and Labrador at 20%, Quebec at 45%, and the Northwest Territories at 53%.

How does Canada compare to other countries in terms of women's representation in politics? What are other countries doing to ensure a balance of power in politics?

SG: Canada ranks 61st in the world in terms of women's political representation. Many central and South American countries are doing much better than Canada because they have been really deliberate about bringing in policies and measures that will guarantee women a minimum level of representation. In fact, [almost all of the countries that are ahead of Canada](#) are using a different form of electoral system.

For example, [research from Sweden](#) found that after the introduction of gender quotas, that requires parties to have as many women as men, the quality of the candidates who were



elected actually went up and the elected officials had better qualifications.

Another example is New Zealand, that eliminated the first-past-the-post system, much like Canada, and replaced it with proportional representation.

Why is it important to achieve gender parity in politics?

SG: Politics have the power to affect every aspect of our lives. Representation is fundamental to democracy and women deserve to be there. Some of the research finds that women are more likely to collaborate across party lines and there's a greater tendency to look at policies from a family-oriented perspectives. So, gender parity in politics is important because it ensures that women's perspectives are adequately represented in decision-making processes, leading to better policies that benefit everyone.