

## BECAUSE IT'S 2018!

By Jeannette Chau, P.Eng.

When Prime Minister Justin Trudeau formed his first cabinet after winning the 2015 federal election, it was composed of 50 per cent women. When asked why he wanted a cabinet with gender parity, he simply said, "Because it's 2015."

Given that the population is more than 50 per cent women, it only seems right that there should be an equal percentage of women in political positions representing us.

By 2015, with all the talk of equality, fairness and the understanding that women are equally capable, there is no reason not to have a cabinet that is composed of an equal proportion of women. Three years later, we can see women have performed their jobs as well as their male counterparts.

Though this was a breakthrough for women in politics, the unfortunate reality is there are still barriers to women in politics. The last elections saw only 35.5 per cent elected provincially and 26 per cent federally. According to the Inter-Parliamentary Union, an international organization of parliaments, Canada ranks 50 out of 190 countries on proportion of national-level female politicians.

### DIVERSITY IN POLITICS

Bringing this concept of diversity of thought and opinion, and looking at it on a different level, we can see that not only is it important to have more women in politics, but more engineers in politics as well. Unfortunately, the statistics on this are extremely poor compared to other professions.

Provincially, out of 107 MPPs elected, only two are engineers, both of whom are male: Jack MacLaren, P.Eng. (MPP, Carleton-Mississippi Mills), and Jim McDonnell, P.Eng. (MPP, Stormont-Dundas-South Glengarry).

Federally, out of the 307 MPs elected, only six are engineers: Omar Alghabra, P.Eng. (MP, Mississauga Centre, Ontario), Hon. Marc Garneau, P.Eng. (MP, Notre-Dame-de-Grâce-Westmount, Quebec), Hon. Steve Blaney, P.Eng. (MP, Bellechasse-Les Etchemins-Lévis, Quebec), Sukh Dhaliwal, P.Eng. (MP, Surrey-Newton, British Columbia), and Nick Whalen, P.Eng. (MP, St John's East, Newfoundland and Labrador).

In 2015, history was made when Marilyn Gladu, P.Eng. (MP, Sarnia-Lambton), became the first female engineer to be elected federally. A female engineer has yet to be elected at the provincial level.



Marilyn Gladu, P.Eng. (MP, Sarnia-Lambton), made history when she became the first federally-elected female engineer.

Ontario and Canada need more engineers, male and female, to get involved with public policy.

Engineers and politicians are problem solvers, they understand that every action is part of a larger whole, and both must put the public good ahead of all else. Additionally, politicians are being asked to deal with highly complex issues—more now than ever before.

MPP Jim McDonnell recently stated: "It is important that more engineers get elected because so many of the issues that we (MPPs) are dealing with right now have to do with science and technology."

Engineers have an analytical mindset, which helps in evaluating complex proposals. Plus, in a 2009 study by Angus Reid, engineers ranked seventh in a list of professionals whom Canadians trust the most—politicians ranked 24th out of 25.

As we head into the 2018 provincial elections, it is hoped more engineers will step up to the plate and get elected.

Because it is 2018. **e**

[Jeannette Chau, P.Eng., is PEO's manager, government liaison programs.](#)

If you are, or you know of, an engineer who has become a nominated candidate to run in the 2018 provincial elections, email PEO Manager of Government Liaison Programs Jeannette Chau, P.Eng., at [jchau@peo.on.ca](mailto:jchau@peo.on.ca) to let her know. We plan to profile all engineers running in the next provincial election in a future issue.