

# Women MPs blur party lines [CA] <sup>[1]</sup>

**Author:** Goar, Carol

**Source:** Toronto Star

**Format:** Article

**Publication Date:** 9 May 2007

## AVAILABILITY

See text below.

## EXCERPTS

Women in businesses, academe and the non-profit sector often say their collegial style is one of their greatest assets. It allows them to get things done, despite departmental rivalries, organizational barriers and ideological differences.

The formula has never worked as well in Parliament. Although female MPs from different parties may like one another personally, they seldom co-operate politically. Although they may have common interests, they seldom make common cause.

For years, this has disappointed those who'd hoped a better gender balance in the House of Commons would improve the tenor politics. Now three female MPs & all belonging to visible minorities & intend to prove that women can work across party lines.

New Democrat Olivia Chow, Liberal Ruby Dhalla and Bloquist Vivian Barbot have joined forces to put child care back on the national agenda. Their goal is to force a parliamentary vote on Bill C-303, a private member's bill calling for a pan-Canadian child-care system with dedicated federal funding.

...

Tomorrow, the parliamentary committee on human resources and social development will begin final consideration of the bill, introduced by New Democrat Denise Savoie last spring.

Although Conservative Dean Allison chairs the committee, the government does not have the numbers to defeat the bill. If Chow, Dhalla and Barbot can rally all of the opposition MPs on the committee to back the legislation, it will go to the House of Commons for third reading and a vote next fall.

Its future would still be uncertain. Harper could call an election before the vote. The opposition parties could have a falling-out. Even if the legislation passed, the government could simply ignore it, as it did with a private member's bill requiring it to live up to the terms of the Kyoto Protocol.

Still, the initiative would make difference.

- It would reopen the national child-care debate. The Tories had hoped their parental allowance scheme would be the last word on the issue.

- It would show that female MPs can set aside partisanship to achieve shared goals. In a minority Parliament, this gives them real bargaining power.

- It would challenge the prevailing view that national social programs are no longer feasible & or even wanted & in the decentralized Canada of today.

# And it would demonstrate that the opposition parties are capable of putting forward constructive policy alternatives.

By necessity, Bill C-303 is a compromise. It falls short of what many New Democrats would like (it allows private operators to stay in business and receive federal funding). It goes farther than the 2005 Liberal strategy (provinces that refuse to abide by Ottawa's conditions don't get federal funds). And it allows Quebec, which is ahead of the rest of the country on child care, to opt out.

If this is the price of progress, it is worth paying, Chow says.

...

It may turn out that the tripartite alliance forged by female MPs in the human resources committee this spring is just a flash in the pan. But there is another, more intriguing, possibility. Women in politics have finally decided to stop behaving like men.

- reprinted from the Toronto Star

**Region:** Canada <sup>[2]</sup>

**Tags:** gender <sup>[3]</sup>

**Source URL (modified on 27 Jan 2022):** <https://childcarecanada.org/documents/child-care-news/07/05/women-mps-blur-party-lines-ca>

**Links**

[1] <https://childcarecanada.org/documents/child-care-news/07/05/women-mps-blur-party-lines-ca> [2] <https://childcarecanada.org/taxonomy/term/7864> [3] <https://childcarecanada.org/category/tags/gender> [4] <https://childcarecanada.org/category/tags/legislation-and-regulation>