

Municipal elections see upsurge of women seeking public office [CA-PE] ^[1]

Author: Day, Jim

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AVAILABILITY

See text below.

EXCERPTS

The Nov. 3 municipal election has attracted an uncommonly large slate of female candidates, with 16 running in Charlottetown, Summerside, Cornwall and Stratford alone.

Some are running, at least in part, because they are women. Others say their gender is -- or should be -- inconsequential to their election bid.

Rona Brown is one of seven women seeking a spot on Charlottetown council. She said she hopes to be judged on merit, not gender, when voters head to the polls.

"I'm very proud to be a mom and that I'm female but I'm there because of who I am as a person," she said of her decision to run for council in Ward 2.

Yet being a woman kept her -- and many others -- from running in the past.

She said she couldn't balance the role of caring for her children with the demands of public office.

For several years, Island women have been nudged and nurtured to take a run at municipal politics. In 1996, the Women's Network P.E.I. received money from the federal government through the Status of Women Canada to do a multi-year project examining the issues of women in politics.

She said women cited many barriers to entering political life, most stemming from traditional gender roles.

"Women not always having the same financial base to work from in either mounting a campaign, having the time from work to run campaigns, transportation issues, child care issues."

The list goes on and on.

- reprinted from the Guardian (Charlottetown)

Region: Prince Edward Island ^[2]

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