

**MEMBER'S STATEMENT — JULIE GREEN, MLA YELLOWKNIFE CENTRE**

**WOMEN IN LEADERSHIP**

**February 10, 2020**

MS. GREEN: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. We have in this room today the largest number of women ever elected to the NWT Legislative Assembly. ---Applause

The election of nine women in October was the result of hard work by current and former Members of this House and many others. The question now, and it is not too early to ask this, is: how do we maintain the equality of political representation we have now achieved?

Mr. Speaker, by way of background, I am going to recap some milestones in the 18th Assembly that got us here. First, Members made correcting the underrepresentation of women a mandate priority, and the Minister responsible for the Status of Women, now the Premier, and I took every opportunity to raise this issue. Second, all Members unanimously supported a motion to increase women's representation with specific targets. Third, the Speaker got on board by tabling a paper in June 2018 about a potential solution: guaranteed seats for women. Next, a special committee, with me as chair, visited 10 communities to talk about guaranteed seats and to find out what barriers prevent women from running to become MLAs.

Mr. Speaker, we gathered a tremendous amount of useful information from the people who attended our hearings. We distilled their ideas for policy changes into seven recommendations in our interim report that were adopted unanimously. These were simple but important changes, such as creating a parental leave provision, making childcare an allowable expense for MLAs, and creating a space in this building for parents to be with their young children. The committee didn't find much support for guaranteed seats, yet it got the conversation started.

Mr. Speaker, another reason for our success in electing so many women is because of training and education efforts. The Premier and I attended campaign schools throughout the NWT in the 18th Assembly. I offered a series of workshops last spring, attended by all the women who were elected in Yellowknife. There were also private mentoring efforts and the launch of a new campaign school curriculum.

I am thrilled that this change took place so quickly and so decisively, but we can't rest. We need to continue educating women to develop the skills and confidence to take part in public life. I will have questions for the Minister responsible for the Status of Women. Mahsi.