

## **MEMBER STATEMENT—JULIE GREEN, MLA YELLOWKNIFE CENTRE**

### **INTERNATIONAL WOMENS' DAY**

**March 4, 2021**

**HON. JULIE GREEN:** Mr. Speaker, you can't hide from me. I want to speak about International Women's Day, which, of course, is on Monday. My statement last year celebrated the near-parity achieved in the 2019 territorial election. That gave women MLAs influence on shaping the priorities of the 19<sup>th</sup> Assembly, to reflect areas where women usually have primary responsibility. On this year's International Women's Day, I want to talk about how to maintain parity in the Legislative Assembly and how to bring more women into levels of government.

We need to build a pipeline to ensure women are ready and able to take on political leadership in the next Assembly. Building a pipeline of female candidates is not going to be easy. Women face challenges to running for office because of the need to modify caregiving roles for children and elders, to work long hours, and to live in a different community from their family. Add to that the challenge of political culture in Canada. Women in public life are harassed online and in person, regularly accused of stupidity and corruption, and held to unrealistic expectations of how they will spend their time while trying to balance their personal lives.

Mr. Speaker, politics is not a career for the faint of heart; it's a 24-7 pressure cooker. Why bother? Because public service is a calling, an opportunity to make a difference, where laws are made, policy written, and budgets developed. Thinking about universal daycare, better student outcomes, more seniors housing? This is where these ideas are debated and sometimes realized. It's a place where passion meets purpose for the greater good of NWT residents.

Once a woman has decided to run for office, there is the question of how to and how much it's going to cost. We have a good answer now to how to: the Women's Advisory Unit created a campaign school for women running for elected positions of all kinds. It's available online to anyone at any time. The question of how to pay for a campaign is an unfinished piece of business. The special committee on increasing the representation of women in the Legislative Assembly heard that the cost of a campaign is a barrier to running. As a result, the committee recommended that there be an election expense rebate program to off set expenses for all candidates, men and women. Rebates are currently available in eight provinces and at the federal level. I resurfaced this idea to the current rules and procedures committee last year, and I am delighted they have recommended adoption of a rebate program for the 2023 election. I look forward to debating this idea in Committee of the Whole.

Mr. Speaker, the next territorial election is two and a half years away. That may seem

like a long time, but we all know it's not. Now is the time for women to consider a career in politics, confirm their passion to make a difference through public service, and line up family support. I encourage every woman here to reach out to women she knows to talk about running. Those of us here now have a duty to help make the 2019 election gains for women sustainable. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.