



Marking a Century of Women's Suffrage
Commémorer un siècle du droit de vote des femmes

e✓equal voice
✓e À voix égales

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Making Change: Organizing a Petition

Making Change is a collection of skill-based education modules, created to equip young women for a variety of political engagement.

These toolkits have three objectives:

1. To **engage and educate** women on a variety of issues that affect their daily lives in work and day-to-day
2. To **enable** women across Canada to explore different pathways to make change and engage in politics and policy on these issues
3. To **provide** policy options, strategies for engagement, and tools of empowerment to allow women to participate in the political and policy process in Canada



Why create or sign a petition?.

Increasing issue salience: Once you have obtained 500 signatures within 120 days of your petition being posted, it is required to be read aloud in the House of Commons. In addition, all petitions read aloud in provincial legislatures and in the House of Commons are collected after being read and sent directly to the corresponding departments.

Strengthening your advocacy community: By mobilizing support for an issue that matters to your community, you will develop skills and connections which you may put to use for future advocacy. Having a support from your community also strengthens your message and level of influence.

Public opinion matters: Even if your petition does not immediately result in policy changes, governments are aware that a large number of citizens mobilized behind a thorny issue means they should probably make progress on the issue to some degree.

Visible and Tangible Engagement: Petitions are unique in that they require your own name to be attached to them. While attending organized rallies, volunteering for causes/organizations and other means of advocacy are important, creating and/or attaching your name to a document is a very visible and tangible way to further your impact. It shows people that you mean business.



What do you need to know?

The House of Commons [offers current guidelines for petitions](#) to be presented in the House.

Here is an example offered by the House of Commons:

The petition must call on the House of Commons - not the government or any individual MP - to take action. The action can not require public money to be spent.

You will need a Member of Parliament to endorse and support your petition. They do not need to be the MP for your riding.

Your petition must be on issue that falls within the authority of the legislative body you are presenting it to. For example, you could present a petition on a First Nations health care issue to the House of Commons, but not on a general health care issue because it is a provincial issue.

[The Canadian Encyclopedia](#) may help you determine which level of government is responsible for overseeing the issue you are concerned with.

First page of petition

PETITION TO THE HOUSE OF COMMONS
IN PARLIAMENT ASSEMBLED

We, the undersigned

{ Here identify, in general terms, who the petitioners are, for example
- citizens (or residents) of Canada
- electors of (name of electoral district)
- residents of the Province of ...
- residents of the City (or Village or Township, etc.) of ...

draw the attention of the House to the following:

THAT,

{ Here briefly state the reasons underlying the request for the intervention of the House by outlining the grievance or problem or by summarizing the facts which the petitioners wish the House to consider.

THEREFORE,
your petitioners

request that Parliament
or
call upon Parliament to

Here set out the "prayer" or request by stating succinctly what action the petitioners wish Parliament to take or what action it should refrain from taking.

Signatures

(Sign your own name. Do not print.)

Addresses

(Give your full home address or your city and province.)

Subsequent pages of petition

THEREFORE, your petitioners

Or
Petition concerning

{ Here repeat the "prayer" or request from the first page of the petition.

{ Here state the subject matter of the petition.

Signatures

(Sign your own name. Do not print.)

Addresses

(Give your full home address or your city and province.)



Provincial/Territorial Resources:

[British Columbia](#)

[Alberta](#)

[Saskatchewan](#)

[Manitoba](#)

[Ontario](#)

[Quebec](#)

[Nova Scotia](#)

[New Brunswick](#)

[Newfoundland](#)

[Prince Edward Island](#)

[The Yukon](#)

[The Northwest Territories](#)

[Nunavut](#)

Tips and Tricks

Collecting signatures and mobilizing support:

1. Start with your friends and family. You need five signatures to get started and these people can help you to get going.
2. Move to issue supporters that you know. Draft a professional-looking email and design graphics and content for social media. You can use a service such as MailChimp for emails and free online graphic design software such as Adobe Spark or Canva.
3. Reach out to organizations that are sympathetic to your cause. Use the aforementioned professional emails and social media links to show that you are well-organized.
4. When possible, engage in person at rallies and events where there are gatherings of groups of people likely to be sympathetic to your cause. It can be helpful to have petitions ready and bring clipboards and pens for ease collecting signatures. If it is a large gathering, organize friends and family to help you canvas. Don't be afraid to be forward, people are more likely to sign your petition if they see you are passionate.
5. Find supporters across the country who are willing to be your organizers there. They can then reach out to their respective networks about the issue. Remember, there is strength in numbers.



Finding political support and a member to endorse and present your petition:

1. Always start with your local MP or MLA/MPP when possible. Offices are far more likely to answer correspondence from a constituent than a non-constituent so make sure to explicitly state that you are a resident in their electoral district.
2. If your local representative is not amenable to your issue, try finding a representative who has proposed private members' bills in the past or has previously supported legislation that is similar to your cause. Remember that neither Cabinet Ministers or Parliamentary Secretaries can be your sponsor.
 - a. This can be a more difficult process. Begin by putting your topic in search engine along with "House of Commons Canada" or your provincial legislature. This may yield results of members who have supported similar initiatives.
 - b. If this does not work, try going to <http://www.ourcommons.ca/Parliamentarians/en/members>. You can browse through the members and under the "Work" tab on their Parl page, you can see the past Private Member's Bills they've drafted.
 - c. Lastly, if both of those options don't work, consult the representative's websites. On their pages, they will often highlight issues that are important to them or their constituents. If your issue aligns with those interests, contact their office.
3. Be persistent in your correspondence, follow-up on your emails, and call the representative's office. Be kind, courteous, and collaborative.