

Providing a **fair voice** for women MPs.

WOMEN'S PARLIAMENTARY RADIO
is an online radio station broadcasting
interviews and documentaries examining
the policies that concern women.

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www-wpradio.co.uk

“ Children who live in households where there is domestic violence feel alone. It is very powerful for them to know there are people out there that really are concerned for them and want to make things better for them. We have a duty to use this information to ensure we do the most we can to make these children’s lives more secure. ”

Margaret Moran, Labour MP for Luton South and Chair of All Party Domestic Violence Group

“ The good news about introducing the priority list and the campaigning of ‘Women2Win’ is that it has led to a higher percentage of women in winnable seats as candidates, which does mean we will have more women in the House of Commons after the next election. I think we still need to do more and we still need to keep up the pressure to ensure that we are encouraging women to think of politics as a career that they can move into. ”

Theresa May, Conservative MP for Maidenhead and Shadow Minister for Women

Women’s Parliamentary Radio reflects on its successes and looks forward to new challenges in 2008

WPRadio has come a long way from its launch early in 2007. In less than a year, we’ve gained a huge level of support from MPs, journalists and campaigners, fine-tuned our new information-packed website to be even more user-friendly, and our content has expanded to become a hub of resources on women in politics, from BBC-provided reporting from parliament to audio and video interviews with a number of MPs. We picked up a nomination for the *Hansard Democracy Award* on Channel 4 and Executive Producer Boni Sones is on the *Dods & Scottish Widows* Shortlist for female political journalist of the year.

In 2008 we will continue to provide accurate reporting of the work that women MPs across parties do in Westminster, and will be reaching abroad to women in international parliaments. There remain challenges to be overcome in 2008: we are still looking to attract sponsorship or to be mainstreamed. On a wider scale, there is still much progress to be made to ensure there is a fair representation of women in parliament and to combat the sexism that remains in much of the political sphere.

“ Women can achieve a lot of things in a lot of areas and I don’t think we need to measure it in terms of hours. We need a more flexible approach to hours, not just for women but for men. What I would like to see is a workplace culture where both men and women can work flexibly so they take an equal share in looking after the children. ”

Lorely Burt, Liberal Democrat MP for Solihull and chair of the Liberal Democrat Party

“ I am actively working in the Labour party to make sure we continue with all women shortlists and I am particularly exercised in getting more black and Asian women into parliament. We have got to look like the communities we serve if we’re going to be relevant in the modern age. ”

Hazel Blears, Labour MP for Salford and Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government

Support WPRadio in giving a fair voice to women MPs by adding your name as a supporter, giving a donation, or providing a link to us in your website.

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We're making some changes to how the courts deal with rape as a structural matter and now we're also looking at the question of attitudes which clearly continues to be prevalent amongst juries too. We're looking at how we can get expertise brought into the courtroom to try and rid juries of those attitudes which are bound to be impeding the number of convictions that they return.

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Vera Baird, Labour MP for Redcar and Solicitor General

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Sometimes its right to be harsh and to the point in the way you behave in the House of Commons and sometimes its right to be rather softer and more consensual. There's something in men that makes them want to fight. That isn't there in women. Therefore I think the more women we have in the house, the more progressive we are becoming in the way we deal with matters on the floor.

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Eleanor Laing, Conservative MP for Epping Forest

We have talked to women MPs across parliament about issues ranging from flexible working hours to the environment and domestic violence, enabling MPs to talk about their hard work in areas often ignored by the media but crucially important in people's lives.

Visit the website to hear Baroness Uddin speak about escaping persecution in Bangladesh and now campaigning on behalf of the Bangladesh community in the UK. Margaret Moran, Labour MP for Luton South, talks about her KIDSPEAK project to allow the children of families who have experience of Domestic Violence to talk directly online. Jo Swinson, the youngest MP in Westminster, argues for lowering the voting age to 16. One special documentary tells the story of a Ugandan woman's struggle with a political career faced by an oppressive regime. Joan Ruddock, Minister for Climate Change, Waste and Recycling, gives her New Year's wish for the environment.

With our "Face to Face" TV series watch Theresa May MP, Shadow Leader of the House, setting out the Conservative agenda for women and their families. Dawn Butler MP, Vice-Chair of the Labour Party for Youth, explains why she told Parliament that: "Men are from Mars, Women are from Venus, and Members of Parliament are from a place not yet discovered."

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I'm 27 and I think I'm too old to be the youngest member of the House of Commons. We've got a lot of young people out there under the age of 30 and just 2 out of 646 MPs who are under 30, so one of the things I try to do is encourage more young people to get involved in politics.

”

Jo Swinson, Liberal Democrat MP for East Dunbartonshire

Women MPs: A special documentary

The **Electoral Reform Society** commissioned WPRadio to send out journalist Linda Fairbrother to interview parliamentarians from the UK, Sweden, Spain and the USA in the search to investigate the reasons why representation of women in the House of Commons is still regrettably low. Despite women having the vote since 1918, under 20% of UK MPs are women. Linda asks why, as a developed democracy who had the first female Prime Minister in Europe, do we come 52nd in the world in its proportion of women in parliament? Amongst those interviewed on the programme are Vice-President of the European Commission Margot Wallstrom, the Spanish MEP Barbara Duhrkop, and Professor Pippa Norris of Harvard University.

“ The subject of forced marriage is so important and such a key moral issue, that it isn't something for which party politicians should seek to make gain. I'm particularly pleased that it was Lord Lester who introduced the bill, because rather like domestic violence I think as long as it was felt that this was just a woman's issue and being treated - critics might have said - in a feminist way, it was hard to get that cultural shift. ”

Caroline Spelman, Conservative MP for Meriden and Chairman of the Conservative Party

“ We still have a 17% gap in pay rates between men and women. A huge penalty is being paid for motherhood, rather than it being celebrated. ”

Frances O'Grady, Deputy General Secretary of the Trade Union Congress

“ Having children helps you to connect with your constituents and helps you to have an understanding of what life is like. You yourself have had to ring up the out of hours doctor, you yourself have had to turn up at A&E, you've had the same kind of concerns about schools, so it certainly helps us to connect. ”

Emily Thornberry, Labour MP for Islington South and Finsbury



www.womenandthevote.com

2008 is a year for celebration. It is 90 years since women in this country first won the right to vote and to be elected to Parliament. Another ten years would see female voters finally granted the same rights as men. Now is the time to reflect on the progress of these pioneers, and just how far we remain from the goal of equality.

WPRadio is kindly supported by the following organisations:



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