

Legislative
Assembly
of Ontario



Assemblée
législative
de l'Ontario

1ST SESSION, 43RD LEGISLATURE, ONTARIO
2 CHARLES III, 2024

Bill 211

An Act to proclaim Persons Day

Co-sponsors:

Ms M. McMahon

Ms A. Clancy

MPP K. Wong-Tam

Private Members' Bill

1st Reading June 6, 2024

2nd Reading

3rd Reading

Royal Assent



An Act to proclaim Persons Day

Preamble

On October 18, 1929, five courageous Canadian women succeeded in having the word “persons” defined as always meaning both women and men. This decision of the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council of Great Britain, Canada’s highest court of appeal at the time, delivered the first significant legal declaration that men and women are equal.

Emily Murphy, Louise McKinney, Henrietta Muir Edwards, Irene Parlby and Nellie McClung, known as the Famous Five, challenged the meaning of the word “persons” under the Constitution, which at the time prevented women from being appointed to the Senate of Canada. As a result of what became known as the Persons Case, both women and men could be appointed to the Senate of Canada, thus enabling most women to participate more fully in public and political life. Furthermore, by advancing equality between men and women, individuals and groups have been able to build on the initial success of the Persons Case thanks to the Famous Five, and significantly achieve equality in other areas.

The Persons Case also introduced the concept of our Constitution as a “living tree” that is able to evolve and adapt to the changing times. Marking October 18 as Persons Day aims to inspire more girls, women and gender-diverse people to be nation builders, and to expand the circle of leaders so that everyone can contribute to building their communities and their country, and benefit from being a Canadian.

Ontario played an important role in the success of the Persons Case. By proclaiming October 18 as Persons Day, we can ensure that women’s leadership can continue.

Therefore, His Majesty, by and with the advice and consent of the Legislative Assembly of the Province of Ontario, enacts as follows:

Persons Day

1 October 18 in each year is proclaimed as Persons Day.

Commencement

2 This Act comes into force on the day it receives Royal Assent.

Short title

3 The short title of this Act is the *Persons Day Act, 2024*.

EXPLANATORY NOTE

The Bill proclaims October 18 in each year as Persons Day.