

OUR FUTURE YOUR PATH

Building Diversity for a Brighter Future in Political Leadership

OUR FUTURE YOUR PATH | MEET MELANIE MARK

Preparing for a Better Future with Greater Diversity in Political Leadership.

The Honourable Melanie Mark, Minister of Tourism, Arts, Culture and Sport and MLA for Vancouver-Mount Pleasant, speaks about advocating for those without agency.



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Building Diversity for a Brighter Future in Political Leadership

The Honourable Melanie Mark speaks up for diversity and the need for women in politics during the NWDLC virtual FireCircle Gathering May 29, 2021.

**POLITICS MATTERS.
REPRESENTATION
MATTERS. DIVERSITY OF
OPINION MATTERS.**

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nwdlc
NEW WESTMINSTER &
DISTRICT LABOUR COUNCIL

POWER
HOUSE
AMPLIFIED!

MLA, First Nation Woman, Matriarch, Warrior.

Elected in 2016, HLI HAYKWHL WII XSGAAK, Melanie Mark, is the only First Nations woman to serve as a Member of the Legislative Assembly (MLA) in British Columbia and in BC's Cabinet. She represents the riding of Vancouver-Mount Pleasant and serves as BC's Minister of Tourism, Arts, Culture and Sport.

Melanie is Nisga'a, Gitksan, Cree and Ojibway. She was born and raised in East Vancouver with deep roots in Northern BC and Manitoba.

Why Politics? To Change Policy!

Melanie is unapologetically passionate about social, environmental and economic justice. She entered politics to disrupt the status quo and be a champion for change. She is proud of the transformational work she did as the former Minister of Advanced Education, Skills and Training. Within two months, she paved a new path by creating the first provincial tuition waiver program for youth from the foster-care system and removed all fees for adults accessing Adult Basic Education. Melanie firmly believes that education is the great equalizer because "a rising tide lifts all canoes".

She is especially proud of advancing articles of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Calls to Action to support Indigenous teachers and a language fluency degree. In 2018 she launched the world's first Indigenous Law program at the University of Victoria.

What I Know Now!

"Politics matters. Representation matters. Diversity of opinion matters." Melanie is a matriarch, a mother, a daughter of intergenerational residential school survivors, and a university graduate. She has twenty years of frontline experience, eight with the Representative for Children and Youth. "Until I was elected, this voice had been missing from the table", she says.

Being an MLA allows you to be a voice for those who are often not heard. "Politics requires grit and resilience. Many people think it's about having "thick skin". In fact, it's about being a relentless advocate with a thundering heart."

What after Covid?

COVID has brought to focus that “we may all be in the same storm, but we are not all in the same canoe”. This means it is our responsibility to support people to meet their daily needs, so they are not left behind.

The Ministry of Tourism, Arts, Culture and Sport represents the social fabric of our province. All sectors of her ministry have had their lives turned upside down and put on hold due to the pandemic.

Melanie’s laser focus is to support the people within these industries and to make sure they are thriving as we work our way out of this health crisis. Melanie is proud to have a seat at the Cabinet table to be an advocate at this historical time.

She hopes to inspire, support and empower future generations to have the courage to step forward and put their name on the ballot.

Melanie's work inspiration comes from being a role model for her daughters. She desires to give them greater access to education and opportunities as they grow up to create a positive path to success.

“Our political institutions need to reflect our diversity and lived experience to inform progressive, rights-based public policy”. Melanie believes that to support future generations to be the decision and change makers requires us to get on board and paddle together.

Melanie is one of the panelists for the FireCircle gathering on May 29, 2021 that launches an innovative, inviting, and inclusive comprehensive engagement and preparatory program for women and non-binary people who may be interested in running a political campaign in the next one to five years.

The virtual FireCircle is a Saturday morning gathering hosted and championed by individuals who have held or are holding public office for individuals interested to learn more about public office and explore the possibility of preparing for it in the future. The FireCircle is designed to convene, inspire, and mobilize women and non-binary people to consider expanding their leadership through this unique and inclusive opportunity - **OUR FUTURE YOUR PATH** - to potentially prepare for public office.