

# NATIONAL POST

## The new face of feminism

**Andrea Mrozek, National Post** Published: Wednesday, September 03, 2008

She's unqualified. Anti woman. A "right-wing man in a skirt and fetching up-do." Feminists went apoplectic when Alaska Governor Sarah Palin was chosen as Senator John McCain's running mate. The same feminists who keep saying we must have more women in politics suddenly changed their minds. We need more women--just not that kind of woman.

How did we manage to get here? Different waves of feminism have rolled in since the suffragettes fought for the right to vote. Today, few are sure what feminism is. If all it means is the right of women to self-determination and to equal opportunity then virtually no one stands against it. That battle has already been won.

North American feminists should be working to extend the fundamental freedoms they enjoy to parts of the globe where such freedoms are absent. But instead, they pitch a package of partisan political beliefs at home. Their palette is left-wing and non-negotiable - especially the part about unrestricted access to, and, ideally, public funding for, abortion.

But the "choice" label is not something every woman wants.

In this very polarized context, it's not surprising that only the very strongest of conservative and pro-life female politicians would rise to the top. It takes a lot of guts not only to stand up to the kind of sisterly abuse described above, but also to compete effectively in a traditionally male-dominated field. To those untainted by ideology, Sarah Palin is gritty determination personified. To establishment feminists, however, she's a disaster.

Why? Two words: family values. She has five kids (which is at least four too many for a dogmatic, career-obsessed feminist) and she's pro-life, even in cases of rape and incest. That she also insists on having the rewarding career that feminists wish they had themselves is just too much.

It's driving her feminist opponents around the bend -- they now find themselves criticizing her for neglecting her children, which is more than a little rich coming from people who never tire of reminding mothers that staying at home to look after their children is a cardinal sin.

It's not a pretty sight. But at least it beats what we're getting here in Canada, where the communications machine goes into shutdown mode at the slightest sign of controversy. Indeed, the clearest sign an election is truly in the offing came when Justice Minister Rob Nicholson ditched Bill C-484, the Unborn Victims of Crime Act, which would have made a violent attack against a pregnant woman a worse offence by recognizing the death of both the mother and her unborn child. Many Canadian politicians -- and especially Conservative ones -- are scared stiff of being thought of as remotely "pro-life," so we get no debate at all. The fact that polls showed 77% of Canadians supported Bill C-484 counted for nothing.

Ultimately, feminism -- in its current manifestation as a hodge-podge of left-wing positions on abortion, gender quotas and family law -- has become a brittle, insecure ideology. Nothing highlights this better than the animus feminists reserve for a woman like Sarah Palin.

Hers is the new face of feminism. Get ready to see more of it. - Andrea Mrozek is manager of research at the Institute of Marriage and Family Canada. [www.imfcanada.org](http://www.imfcanada.org).