

18th Legislative Assembly of the Northwest Territories

Special Committee to Increase the Representation of Women in the Legislative Assembly

Final Report

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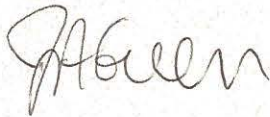
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SPEAKER OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

Mr. Speaker:

Your Special Committee to Increase the Representation of Women in the Legislative Assembly is pleased to provide its *Final Report on Increasing the Representation of Women in the Legislative Assembly* and commends it to the House.



Julie Green
Chairperson
Special Committee to Increase the
Representation of Women in the Legislative Assembly

**SPECIAL COMMITTEE TO
INCREASE THE REPRESENTATION OF WOMEN
IN THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY**

FINAL REPORT

TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION.....	1
Background.....	2
RESPONSE TO SPEAKER’S DISCUSSION PAPER.....	3
Discussing Gender Quotas.....	3
Discussing Measures Increasing the Representation of Women.....	4
Discussing Guaranteed Seats.....	6
Pros and Cons of Guaranteed Seats.....	8
Considering Guaranteed Seats for Women in the NWT.....	9
Additional Suggestions.....	10
Plebiscite.....	11
Recommendation 1.....	11
OTHER CHANGES REQUIRING LEGISLATIVE CHANGE.....	12
Election Expense Rebate.....	12
Recommendation 2.....	15
GOING FORWARD.....	15
NWT Women Lead in Community Leadership.....	15
Establish a NWT Leadership Program for Women.....	16
Recommendation 3.....	18
CONCLUSION.....	18
REFERENCES.....	19
List of Public Hearings.....	APPENDIX A
List of Written Submissions.....	APPENDIX B
NWT Election Expense Rebate Options.....	APPENDIX C
Interim Report.....	APPENDIX D

SPECIAL COMMITTEE TO INCREASE THE REPRESENTATION OF WOMEN IN THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

FINAL REPORT

INTRODUCTION

The Special Committee to Increase the Representation of Women in the Legislative Assembly (Committee) was tasked to gather information and public input into options on how to support the goal of increasing women's representation in the Legislative Assembly to 20 percent by 2023 and 30 percent by 2027.

The Committee is pleased to present this Final Report which was developed in accordance with Committee's mandate as determined by the Terms of Reference. This report includes consideration of the discussion paper "Temporary Special Measures to Increase the Representation of Women in the Northwest Territories Legislative Assembly" (Discussion Paper) presented by the Speaker of the Legislative Assembly in May 2018.

Committee heard overwhelming support for encouraging more women to run for elected seats and increasing the number of women in the legislature. Committee heard the need for more public discussion on how to reach these goals.

During public hearings and stakeholder meetings, Committee discussed guaranteed seats, a solution proposed to increase women's representation. Feedback on the Discussion Paper included discussion of alternative and complementary measures that participants suggested may be considered or may work well in their communities and the Northwest Territories (NWT).

In this report, we respond to the Discussion Paper and briefly discuss gender quotas and guaranteed seats in legislatures in other countries. We report views residents shared with us including: suggestions for other legislative changes; changes to any current rules of the Legislative Assembly; current and related legislation; and policies of the Government of the Northwest Territories (GNWT) and the Legislative Assembly.

The Committee makes three recommendations intended to improve conditions for women's engagement in territorial politics.

Finally, the Committee urges the Members of the 19th Assembly to continue the work that has begun under this Special Committee and continue efforts to increase gender equity in the Legislative Assembly.

The Committee Members thank the communities for their warm welcome and participants for their time and effort in attending the meetings and openly sharing their opinions. Committee is appreciative of all submissions received, as they informed the Committee's discussions and recommendations.

Background

The Committee began work on November 28, 2018, and consulted with the public in ten community hearings throughout the Northwest Territories as listed in Appendix A of this report. Approximately 120 individuals attended the public meetings, 90 percent being women. Most public hearings were televised and remain accessible on Facebook and Twitter, except where technical challenges prevented the live recording. The Committee received 11 written submissions as listed in Appendix B and additional requests for meetings with interest groups who had also been invited to provide written submission.

Tasked with identifying barriers that prevent women from running, and recommending incentives that mitigate these barriers, the Committee tabled an Interim-Report on March 12, 2019. In accordance with the overall goal of helping increase the representation of women in the Northwest Territories Legislative Assembly, the Committee made seven recommendations which were adopted unanimously by the Members of the Legislative Assembly (MLAs). The interim report is included as Appendix C and is available on the Committee's webpage.

Four of seven recommendations proposed measures to support work-life balance for parents, introducing child care-friendly provisions to the Legislative Assembly and requiring a review of the family-friendliness of the building. The remaining three recommendations provide solutions to removing barriers preventing women from participating successfully in politics: making information on consensus government more accessible; information about the specifics of an MLA's role; and increasing campaign training for women in the NWT.

RESPONSE TO SPEAKER'S DISCUSSION PAPER

An important goal of the Discussion Paper was to spark public discussion on increasing the representation of women in the NWT Legislative Assembly and the provision of guaranteed seats as a temporary measure to help make this happen.

The discussion prompted by the creation of this Committee has only begun, and Committee strongly believes it is an important dialogue that needs to continue.

One prominent theme Committee heard during public meetings was that conversations on how to increase representation of women are needed in communities and the Northwest Territories, and opportunities should be created for this discussion to continue.

“While we do face barriers, conversations like these start the knowledge sharing that can help to reduce some of the strains and barriers that may deter women from running for any position.” (Natasha Kulikowski, Written Submission, 11 April 2019)

Discussing Gender Quotas

There are three main gender quota models in use in other jurisdictions: Two of these, electoral candidate quotas, and political party quotas, are reliant upon a party-based political system. The third involves the provision of guaranteed seats. Each of these models intervenes at a different point in the electoral process.

Electoral candidate quotas are a mechanism by which political parties are required to bring a pre-determined proportion of female to male candidates forward for elections. This model is found to be most effective if it mandates a minimum threshold of 30 percent of women candidates per list. Electoral candidate quotas are often accompanied by sanctions against parties for non-compliance. (Rosen 2017)

Gender quotas are a mechanism to regulate a percentage of those elected must be women. A quota can also apply to both sexes. In Slovenia, for example, 40 percent of either sex candidates must be included in any list of candidates. Prior to this legal gender quota, women's representation at the national level varied between 14 to 25 percent. (Gaber 2019)

In Canada, the federal Standing Committee on the Status of Women encouraged registered parties to “set voluntary quotas for the percentage of female candidates they field in federal elections and to publicly report on their efforts to meet these quotas after every federal general election” (April 2019 Report).

This model cannot be implemented under the current territorial political system, where candidates run as independents and there are no political parties. Without political parties, there are no party candidate lists and it is unclear who would bring sanctions and to whom they would be applied to if not enough women candidates come forward.

“Absent political parties or proportional representation, the NWT Legislative Assembly has limited structural means to influence the number of women candidates who run in a given election.” (Office of the Speaker of the NWT Legislative Assembly, 2018).

A study comparing quota models in 160 countries concluded gender quota legislation is a practical point of departure for those looking to increase women’s political representation. But implementation shows significant differences across countries, in quota design and outcomes.

The complexity that exists in the interplay between electoral systems, socioeconomic development status, and the presence of conflict in a country, makes it difficult to predict results for any country based on specific quota models alone (Rosen 2017).

Recent research compared women’s combined legislative representation in countries without gender quotas to those with quotas. We find that the representation of women in legislatures with gender quotas is approximately ten percent higher than in countries without quotas (Hughes and Paxton 2019).

Through its research, Committee found that quotas have the potential to substantially increase women’s representation in national legislatures. In the studies consulted, researchers also agree that quotas, including guaranteed seats, can be a ‘fast track’ to increase women’s political representation.

Discussing Measures Increasing the Representation of Women

Committee heard that the Discussion Paper is a “wonderful and good first step in efforts to increase the representation of women in the NWT Legislative Assembly” (Wendy Bisaro).

“I cannot stress strongly enough how much I believe greater representation of women in the NWT Assembly is needed. A woman’s perspective on just about anything is different from a man’s view on the same thing. It is not better or worse, just different.” (Wendy Bisaro, Written Submission, 15 February 2019)

Committee was told that the perspective of approximately 50 percent of the NWT’s population is missing because women are not adequately represented in the Legislative Assembly. We heard that this absence of the female perspective affects the whole of the population, because those elected are making laws and policies for all residents of the NWT.

The Discussion Paper offers a proposal on how the NWT Legislative Assembly could reach its goals of 20 and 30 percent women Members by 2023 and 2027, respectively, by applying a system adopted in Samoa, which provides a constitutional guarantee of a minimum of five seats for women.

Committee was often asked why the goal of 30 percent women by 2027 was not set at 50 percent. Some respondents asked that, instead of using special measures, the electoral system be changed to guarantee women fifty percent of the seats, without a time limit. Committee heard that this proposal for temporary special measures does not go far enough and should strive for true gender balance.

“In particular, the Council would like to see the Legislative Assembly fully explore a Gender-Equal Legislative Assembly as this model is consistent with gender equality and involves a democratic process: female and male candidates are voted for by their constituents and one female and one male candidate are elected to the Legislative Assembly per district” (Status of Women Council of the NWT, Written Submission, 3 May 2019)

Twenty years ago, before the creation of Nunavut in 1999, an appointed implementation commission proposed a two-member constituency model for the new territory, recommending a gender-equal Legislative Assembly. A man and a woman would be elected by all voters in each district. The proposal was put to a non-binding public vote in May 1997, resulting in 57 percent of ballots against the idea. Had the system been implemented, Nunavut’s Assembly would have been the world’s first gender-equal, democratically-elected legislature. Currently, six of 22 Members (27 percent) of Nunavut’s Legislative Assembly are women.

During public meetings, we also heard that the temporary measures should in fact ask for 90 percent of guaranteed seats for women for the next 36 years to balance out the inequity of the past, ensuring that 90 percent of legislators are women.

Committee heard a proposal for a system that would guarantee five seats at large for women to join the legislature without having a riding, in addition to the existing riding-based electoral system. Some had reservations about this proposal and stressed that it would put women into an unfair position, having to campaign NWT-wide and having to pay higher campaign costs compared to men who would run for election in local ridings. Given that raising campaign funds is already identified as a barrier to women running, this model was seen as double disadvantage for women.

Committee heard from participants that several countries have established guaranteed seats and that the Committee should look to models other than Samoa's before settling on a model.

Discussing Guaranteed Seats

Guaranteed or reserved seats are an electoral mechanism that has become a popular tool in modern democracies. The purpose of guaranteed seats is to ensure that representation in legislative assemblies is more reflective of the population being governed.

Countries use guaranteed seats as a mechanism to include populations on the basis of ethnicity, language, religion, geography and/or gender. Legislatures reserving seats on the basis of ethnicity, not based on language, include New Zealand, India, and Rwanda. Countries recognizing language or national identity are predominantly European countries, such as Slovenia and Kosovo. Religious identity is the basis for guaranteed seats in countries in the Middle East and South Asia and geographical representation is used where islands are detached from the nation-state's main land (Fiji, Isle of Man in the United Kingdom).

Many countries have developed gender quota systems in conjunction with other measures imbedded in the countries' socioeconomic realities. In this mix of measures, guaranteed seats may be chosen to address one factor of representation, and in countries with political party systems, electoral lists may be the tool used to establish gender quotas.

Belgium, for example, established guaranteed seats for each of the three language communities of the nation to ensure that each of its communities is represented in the

Belgian parliament. Belgium's electoral system is a party-based system with proportional representation. Political parties have to comply with a gender quota and each candidate list must have as many women as men candidates listed. In this way, Belgium applied a gender quota of 50 percent to all electoral lists. This does not guarantee that all women will be elected, however, voters chose from an equal number of women and men when voting.

Rwanda, to ensure long-lasting peace after war and genocide, developed an elaborate system of reserved seats, quotas and other mechanisms to ensure gender and minority representation. Rwanda is also the only country with sanctions for non-compliance of its reserved seat quota.

New Zealand, the first country to make women eligible to vote (in 1893), and to stand for election to parliament (in 1919), has today 49 woman Members of Parliament and surpasses the 40 percent mark in gender representation in its legislature. New Zealand's early path toward gender equity is seen as a combination of political will among parliamentarians, and a desire for equal rights by the Pākehā settler feminists in convergence with Māori women petitioning on land rights and women's rights. Both women's groups continued throughout the country's history to organize advocacy for representation.

New Zealand's voting system includes a number of guaranteed seats for Māori, the Indigenous peoples of New Zealand. Māori representation was guaranteed through the establishment of separate Māori electorates as early as 1867. In 1973, the government introduced the "Māori Electoral Option" allowing electors of Māori descent to choose whether they enrolled in General or in Māori seats. Electoral reforms in 1993 created a Mixed-Member Proportional voting system in New Zealand while maintaining the guaranteed Māori seats.

Today, out of the 120 seats in parliament, 29 belong to members of Māori descent including the seven seats guaranteed for Māori determined by the size of the population who self-identify as having Māori ethnicity. This distribution raised discussions of whether the guaranteed seats are needed.

Many Māori have argued for the retention of guaranteed seats not only as providing guaranteed representation but also as a symbolic recognition and practical manifestation of the Treaty of Waitangi in the New Zealand Parliament. Abolitionists argue it is a flawed model that may sideline Māori concerns.

It is generally believed that the existence of guaranteed seats plays a large part in explaining the larger representation of Māori in Parliament, in particular when comparing to the low representation in Australia of Aboriginal people in political office, where no such measures exist.

Pros and Cons of Guaranteed Seats

Committee heard various views on the proposed solutions to increase women representation in the Legislative Assembly by applying temporary measures. Some found that temporary guaranteed seats are a good measure but had concerns on what the impact would be in the long-term; other rejected the idea of guaranteed seats in principle.

In Committee's public hearings, those who spoke against the idea of guaranteed seats had concerns of principle with the idea of reserving seats. Committee heard that guaranteed seats may be seen as a form of tokenism with the negative implication that the seats are held by women lacking merit. In this way, guaranteed seats present 'freebees' or 'pity seats' and were said to possibly hurt women on their path to equality.

We heard concerns that while well-meaning, guaranteed seats for women may be a disservice to women by increasing their vulnerability to harassment and provoking comments disregarding the merit of those women who gained guaranteed seats. Guaranteed seats were described as exposing women to possible stigmatized treatment and gendered comments.

Concern was also raised that women legislators in reserved seats may be more likely to be marginalized from power or cabinet positions. This concern, however, is not limited to guaranteed seats but could apply to all women legislators, under the current system used in the Northwest Territories for the selection of Cabinet Ministers.

The opposite view was also mentioned, that bringing more women into the legislature would ease the stress on the few women who hold seats and who may feel like tokens. In this context, the conflicts that may arise through guaranteed seats were considered temporary.

"If you want to achieve equality in numbers of men and women at the Legislative Assembly, there exists a reasonably easy way of achieving this. It is not my idea but I like it: give each constituency two MLAs, one man and one woman." (Dave Nickerson, Public Hearing Yellowknife, 8 May 2019)

Considering Guaranteed Seats for Women in the NWT

To achieve the target of 20 percent women in the NWT Assembly of 19 Members, at least four women would need to win seats. Currently, two women hold seats in the NWT Legislature, representing 11 percent of the seats.

The Discussion Paper shows first, how many guaranteed seats would be required for a 20 and a 30 percent representation of women in the NWT Legislative Assembly. Then, the Discussion Paper shows how scenarios would have played out in the past NWT elections of 2015, 2011, and 2007. Three additional seats would have been required in 2015 and 2011. Two additional seats would have been required in 2007, as three women were elected. To achieve the target of a 30 percent representation of women, six additional seats would have been needed in 2015 and 2011. Five more seats would have been added in 2007.

The Discussion Paper sparked discussion on how the model of guaranteed seats could encourage young women to participate more in politics.

“And I really liked how you referenced the Samoa people [...] and their concept of reserved seating and I think that if you wanted to be a bit progressive and move forward and encourage women in politics that might be one solution to look at. I think what they started out with was they had 6 reserved seats and not all of them were filled the first time they started that, but I think that might encourage more women to come out if you have that sort of model to go after as well. (Jessica Landry, Public Hearing Dettah, January 16, 2019)

Committee heard questions with regard to the Discussion Paper’s proposals. For example, if five additional women members are appointed through this model, how would the Cabinet and Regular Members function? Would Cabinet be larger? Would Regular Members number 16 with a seven member Cabinet? Others wondered how the additional seats would be funded and how the possible higher representation of women for Yellowknife would be dealt with.

“Since the beginning, there have only been 12 women, six of them are indigenous women, like Lisa Laurier, Nellie Cournoyea, Ethel Blondin-Andrew, Lena Pederson, Helen Maksagak, Manito Thompson” (Jane Groenewegen, Public Hearing Hay River, 9 January 2019).

Committee heard a variety of comments, including that incumbent women who do not win their seat back should be excluded from reserved seats. Confusion was expressed

regarding how the guaranteed seats relate to women candidates who only narrowly lose against their male competitors. It was also suggested that seats should be given to those candidates who were successful in getting high voter percentages.

Another option suggested in the Discussion Paper is to allocate additional seats to constituencies with the “highest level of relative underrepresentation” according to the findings of the Electoral Boundaries Commission. The last commission report (2013) identified Monfwi, Yellowknife, and the Sahtu as relatively under-represented.

The Discussion Paper identified several areas for additional study such as: the make-up of Cabinet; how vacancies would be filled between general elections; and whether additional women members would represent specific ridings or the NWT at large.

The discussion paper concludes that the measures proposed could be put in place for a limited time, such as two or three elections, and then automatically sunset. In the meantime, if targets were met through the normal electoral process, no extra, guaranteed seats would be needed.

Committee did not hear a discussion on the temporary nature of the proposed scenarios specifically, or options for alternative time frames.

Additional Suggestions

Committee was asked to consider a quota for women ministerial positions, in addition to guaranteed seats for women legislators. Setting a minimum number of women ministers was described as the ‘true’ factor in gender equality. Recommendations by the federal Standing Committee on the Status of Women encouraged changes in electoral politics to achieve more gender equality. Electoral district associations would set goals and publicly report on their efforts, including achieving gender parity on their boards of directors and positions of leadership (House of Commons 2019).

There have been calls for position quotas in leadership in other countries. For example, changes proposed to the Maldives government included introducing a mandatory quota of 30 percent for women in leadership positions, and at least one vice president in political parties with more than one deputy leader.

Plebiscite

Committee believes that women holding a greater share of seats in the Legislative Assembly will have multiple beneficial effects for the NWT. The most direct and immediate impact will be increased equality of representation and the inclusion of missing perspectives. Increasing women's participation will also affect the performance of politics in the areas of policymaking, public opinion and the legislature as workplace.

Committee heard that Temporary Special Measures should be a plebiscite issue. If guaranteed seats are deemed necessary in the NWT, they would have to be legislated as suggested in the Speaker's Discussion Paper.

Two plebiscites have been held in the Northwest Territories, one in 1982 on the division of the territories, and a second one 10 years later in 1992 on the boundary between the NWT and Nunavut. The first plebiscite also began with a recommendation made by a special committee of the Assembly.

Committee notes the agreement on increasing gender equity and the number of women in the Legislative Assembly based on public hearings and submissions received. However, agreement on how to best achieve this goal was not evident.

The Committee determined that, should the 2019 election not result in a minimum of 20 percent of women representation, a plebiscite to obtain public feedback on proposed temporary measures to guarantee a minimum number of seats for women in the Legislature, is something that will contribute to the goal of increasing the representation of women in the Assembly.

While the motion adopted by the Legislative Assembly in March 2018 established a goal of 20 per cent in 2023, Committee is looking for increased representation as soon as the 2019 election. Committee is hopeful that the changes recommended in the interim report will contribute to reaching the goals faster.

Recommendation 1

The Special Committee to Increase the Representation of Women in the Legislative Assembly recommends that if the 2019 election does not meet 20 percent women representation, the 19th Legislative Assembly call a plebiscite to determine which of the options set out in the Discussion Paper is preferred by the electorate.

OTHER CHANGES REQUIRING LEGISLATIVE CHANGE

Research demonstrates that we often find a combination of several measures working together: creating discussion and lobbying platforms for women; allocating funds for training and skills-building; establishing women's wings and committees; and legislating financial incentives and assistance programs. Committee heard the suggestion of a women's caucus as an idea to be explored and perhaps to be considered in the future.

Committee heard the proposal to consider limiting the number of terms for which an individual MLA could be re-elected. Incumbency was mentioned as one of the biggest struggles to overcome for new candidates. Limiting the number of terms would encourage change and allow a greater number of different individuals to take of the challenge of serving as a Member of the Legislative Assembly. It would also, however, deprive the legislature of the wisdom that comes from having experienced MLAs in office.

"I used to think 2 terms should be the limit. I did not realize then that one term is barely enough to understand what you are doing. So maybe three terms, that would be 12 years. It is hard to say. Incumbency is such an obstacle. (Chris Westwell, Public Hearing Fort Smith, 8 January 2019).

Another suggestion is rotating of the Deputy Speaker among men and women MLAs. In this proposal, there would be two Deputy Speakers, one woman and one man, and a rule that requires the Deputy Speakers to alternate when taking on their duties.

Election Expense Rebate

The *NWT Elections and Plebiscites Act* limits the allowable amount of personal funds a candidate may spend on her or his candidacy to \$30,000. Committee heard a proposal to reduce this amount to \$20,000 because first, this high amount sets a bar and may have potential candidates shy away from running, and secondly, in the past, very few candidates in the NWT have spent more than \$20,000 on their campaign.

"A suggestion I would make is to lower that amount so that the total of expenses isn't \$30 grand. It could be brought to \$20. I mean, look at the last election, the average for a winning seat of spending has been something like \$15,000 dollars. So spending \$30 grand doesn't happen to win you anything, but having that out there as the upper layer certainly does set a tone and that can very easily scare somebody off." (David Waslyciw, Public Hearing Yellowknife, 8 May 2019).

In most of Canada's jurisdictions, the definition of election expenses includes all costs incurred to promote the election of a candidate or a political party and is determined in legislation. Reimbursement of part of the election expenses to candidates is provided in most jurisdictions with the exception of Alberta and British Columbia, and the three territories.

Where reimbursement is available, it is most often based on the candidate having received a minimum of votes, ranging between 5 (Prince Edward Island) and 15 percent (Saskatchewan) of the valid votes cast in their constituency. Candidates who qualify for reimbursements of election expenses may receive between 15 (Canada) and 60 percent (Saskatchewan) of their qualifying expenses, depending on jurisdiction and additional rules.

"It is more the financial issues, how do we run, how do we set up office, get campaign material, [...] a fund would make it easier." (Priscilla Canadian, Public Hearing Fort Providence, 10 January 2019)

Committee heard many comments on the subject of campaign funding and election expenses which is perceived by some women to be a barrier to entering politics. Participants noted that no legislation pertaining to women's access to political financing exists, nor are there organizations in place in the NWT to support women running for office as are found in other jurisdictions. Paying for campaigns was described as tough and fund-raising was also described as difficult. Women explained that they are not comfortable being fundraisers. Many mentioned they do not like the idea of going door-to-door and asking for money.

Women told the Committee that they struggle with raising the money required to run an effective campaign. While initiatives like the Campaign Schools can help teach how to overcome this problem, financial incentives and assistance programs would provide additional help to women to run for elected seats.

The Committee's research found that formal mechanisms to level the playing field between men and women do not exist in the Northwest Territories. Ideally, up-front financial support would enable non-privileged women to have the funds to run for office. However, it was noted a general mechanism reducing the financial burden after a campaign would also help women. One suggestion made to Committee was to provide election expense rebates for women candidates.

Committee considered the recommendation of a NWT election expense rebate and conducted an analysis of how much a rebate program would cost. In the past three elections, candidate expenses varied among ridings and by candidate. The Committee looked at how much a rebate program would cost, using certain parameters.

First, any money contributed to the campaign was not counted towards an eligible expense, with the exception of a donation by the candidate themselves, so only money spent by the candidate, that was not covered by a donation was considered an eligible expense for the rebate. Second, a candidate was required to receive a minimum of five percent of the total votes in that riding to be eligible for a rebate. Finally, the Committee decided that a cap should be in place, and only allow a 50 percent rebate for eligible election expenses.

The Committee looked at two options for this. The first cap was set at \$10,000, so a candidate would be eligible for a maximum rebate of \$5,000. The second cap was set at \$6,000, meaning a candidate would receive a maximum of \$3,000 back. In Appendix C, the results of the Committee's research are presented, with expenses being listed and possible rebates calculated.

The Committee found that women would benefit from a rebate, as female candidates have historically spent more out of pocket than male candidates. In both scenarios, the rebate amount calculated for women would have been higher than for men. Considering scenario two with a cap of \$6,000, the average rebate for women would have been \$1,430, while for men it would have been \$910.

The benefit of a rebate appears larger for women than for men as Committee's research has found that in the NWT, women expend more of their personal money for their campaigns. This result confirms the information Committee heard from women and their expressed discomfort with raising funds and asking for money. Providing partial reimbursement of candidate election expenses under specified conditions contributes to the removal of barriers for women to run and maintains a fair regime for all candidates.

Based on numbers from the past three elections, the overall cost to government would come to about \$60,000 every four years to allow for an election expense rebate.

Recommendation 2

The Special Committee to Increase the Representation of Women in the Legislative Assembly recommends to the Legislative Assembly to create an election rebate for candidates who receive at least 5 percent of the votes cast in her or his electoral district in the NWT, reimbursing 50 percent of eligible personal election expenditures up to a maximum rebate amount of \$3,000.

GOING FORWARD

Committee heard from the public that access to role models, mentorship and networking are needed and wanted factors in developing skills and confidence to be successful in politics. Women pointed out that there is a need to increase the opportunities for training in leadership and public speaking. Women mentioned that the creation of local and community discussion groups for women only would be particularly beneficial for women to exchange opinions and develop electoral positions. It was pointed out that these opportunities are currently rare or non-existent and that this gap presents a serious deterrent to female candidacy.

“To have a women-in-leadership course would reinforce a lot of us here to be more confident, and I think by having the course in the community, you will see women come forward.” (Joyce McLeod, Public Hearing Fort Providence, 10 January 2019)

NWT Women Lead in Community Leadership

Committee heard that it is not a question of whether or not women have leadership skills. The problem rather is how to encourage women to make the step from local leadership and regional senior positions into the legislature. In addition, it was pointed out that there have been many women deputy ministers in the territorial bureaucracy, raising the question of what it would take to have these women consider and make the move to the legislature and possibly to a role as Cabinet Minister.

Others mentioned that, since there are many women in leadership roles now at the community level, it is support and time that will bring women into the Legislative Assembly. It was stressed that, in addition to and more importantly than Campaign

Schools, education is key and it should be part of the dynamic of helping women run. It was mentioned that mentoring and specific training for women, targeted at formalizing leadership skills, would be at least as useful as introducing guaranteed seats.

“Women are as varied in their personal opinions and experience as are men. There should be no assumptions that a “women’s issue” impacts or unifies all women in exactly the same way. Strengthen women’s advocacy organizations so that the diversity of women’s perspectives can be fully represented; including Indigenous women, visible minorities and immigrant women.” (Caroline Wawzonek, Written Submission, 1 March 2019)

In 2018, women took many top leadership positions in NWT municipalities; the NWT experienced never before seen numbers of women in leadership at the community level. All four women mayoral candidates in the NWT 2018 fall municipal elections were elected. Committee heard agreement on the need for more promotion to support this change.

A key theme Committee heard was that women are comfortable as leaders in their communities but lack connection to formal political spaces. The recent ‘Elect Her’ report by the House of Commons Standing Committee on the Status of Women also found that there is a gap for women between municipal and national politics. Women generally are motivated to create change and to help people and their communities.

Statistics Canada found that women and men participate in politics in different ways; women tend to spend more time on local and civic issues; and women generally vote at higher rates than men, and women are more likely than men to indicate ‘feeling uninformed’ as their reason for not voting. (Statistics Canada, House of Commons 2019)

“We need more females in politics because they say women are the future but really it is the female youth that are our future. Having different committees or programs that can help spark female youth interest or get their confidence up can help us.” (Female Youth, Public Hearing Tuktoyaktuk, 3 April 2019)

Establish a NWT Leadership Program for Women

Committee took note of research on the effect of female role models in countries with women legislators. Women in the legislature were found to contribute to closing the gender gap in political participation. Current research found that women legislators serve as role models for women and the proportion of women in cabinet has a stronger

effect on participation than the proportion of women in parliament. Women in the legislative assembly have a significant impact on increasing electoral participation. (Beauregard 2017, Kittilson 2019, Liu and Bannaszak 2017)

Examples of existing programs include the UN Women's programs on leadership and participation, programs that work with civil society to uphold women's rights, and strengthen arrangements for gender equality and women's empowerment.

Offering workshops in communities was another point Committee heard as a good tool to reach women. The Deline Got'ine Government hosted the 'Gender and Resurgence' workshop for Indigenous women in early May 2019, to reflect on women's initiatives.

"If there was a leadership program here like the one they have in Nova Scotia, it would ignite women's political participation. We already have mentors available [...]. If we are looking at the residential school area, that generation created the NWT. The schools these people went to, they have hidden degrees and all the experience and knowledge they have; we could teach our own." (Paula Chinna, Public Hearing Norman Wells, 5 April 2019)

Several times, Committee heard the recommendation for a NWT leadership program for women in politics. The 'Indigenous Women in Leadership' program was offered as an example that could be adapted in developing an NWT leadership course for women. It is a five-day course taught by a faculty of the Banff Centre for Arts and Creativity geared to "Indigenous women leaders and managers who are responsible for the future of communities and organizations". The program identifies challenges of leadership pertaining to accountability, performance, decision-making, delegation, and mentoring, including social and economic issues, trends and implications.

Committee heard of women in leadership programs offered by St. Francis Xavier University in Nova Scotia as good examples that if adopted in the NWT would ignite women interest in running for elected seats. The Coady International Institute offers women's leadership programs with a separate program focussed on Indigenous women.

The Committee recommends that the NWT establish a leadership program specifically in support of developing women leadership. Committee heard at every occasion that women in the NWT require support in leadership development and access to leadership networks. Establishing a women's leadership program in the NWT will address this need.

Recommendation 3

The Special Committee to Increase the Representation of Women in the Legislative Assembly recommends the NWT Legislative Assembly support the new NWT Polytechnic University to establish a leadership program designed to assist women to gain the skills and knowledge to take on leadership roles, including territorial, Indigenous and political positions.

CONCLUSION

Committee was tasked to “identify and implement a wide range of strategies, including positive action, public debate, and training and mentoring for women as leaders, to achieve these goals”. The Committee was pleased by the level of interest demonstrated by participants during community visits. Committee’s work has underlined the existing interest and the need for dialogue on the role of and opportunities for women to participate in territorial politics.

Committee noted in its Interim Report that, because the realities of each jurisdiction will influence the effects that incentives have on women’s participation, electoral systems cannot be the sole tool to increase women’s representation. Research confirms that it is important to find that mix of measures that will work best within each socio-economic context. Changing the workplace by providing opportunities for work-life balance also can have a positive effect on increasing the share of women in Legislative Assemblies.

Committee is hopeful that implementation of recommended changes in both, the interim and the final report will advance reaching the proposed goals of this Assembly.

Committee recommends that the 19th Assembly continue the work the Committee has begun and further identify the measures that are required to increase the representation of women in the NWT Legislative Assembly.

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APPENDIX A: List of Public Hearings

The following table lists the public hearings held by Committee. An additional table provides social media statistics of the recorded public hearings.

Date of Meeting	Location	Attendees
8-Jan-10	Fort Smith	15
9-Jan-19	Hay River	19
10-Jan-10	Fort Providence	19
16-Jan-19	Dettah	10
17-Jan-19	Yellowknife	Approx. 20
03-Apr-19	Inuvik	11
04-Apr-19	Tuktoyaktuk	13
2-May-19	Norman Wells	6
21-May-19	Behchokò	--

Social Media Statistics

*All numbers are as of May 27, 2019

Date of Meeting	Location	Facebook Views	Facebook Likes	Facebook Shares	Facebook Viewer Comments	Twitter Periscope Views	Youtube Views
16-Jan-19	Dettah	922	10	17	16	102	11
17-Jan-19	Yellowknife	187	3	1	3	85	26
03-Apr-19	Inuvik	270	9	3	6	33	21
04-Apr-19	Tuktoyaktuk	475	7	5	24	44	0
21-May-19	Behchokò	22	0	0	0	23	0

APPENDIX B: List of Written Submissions

The following is an alphabetical list of organizations and individuals who submitted written documentation to the Committee related to this report. For more information and to access the full submission, please consult the Committee's webpage.

Organizations and Individuals

2019-01-17 Dave Nickerson

2019-01-23 Rhonda Buckland

2019-02-12 Katherine Robinson

2019-02-15 Wendy Bisaro

2019-03-01 Caroline Wawzonek (Speaking Notes, IPAC Panel Discussion on Women in Political Leadership)

2019-04-03 Louise Elder (Speaking Notes, IPAC Panel Discussion on Women in Political Leadership)

2019-04-03 Anonymous Youth submission

2019-04-11 Natasha Kulikowski, Mayor of Inuvik, NT

2019-04-16 Anne-Marie Jennings

2019-04-26 Equal Voice Canada, Policy Brief: Women's Underrepresentation in Politics, Paige Kezima

2019-05-03 Status of Women Council of the N.W.T., President Violet Camsell-Blondin

APPENDIX C: NWT Election Expense Rebate Options

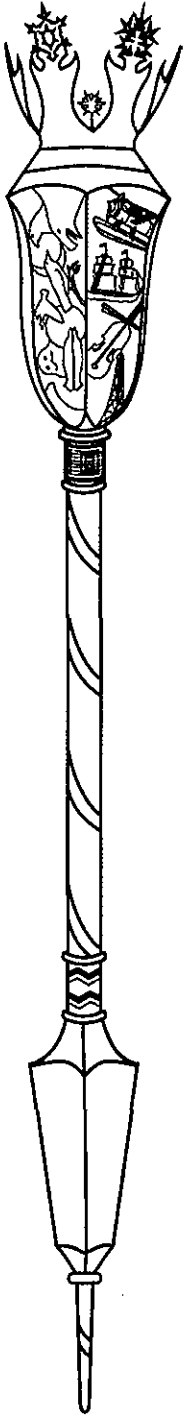
The following tables calculate to election expense rebate options based on the past three NWT elections.

Option 1: Election Expense Rebate on Personal Expenses of up to \$10,000.								
Election Year	Number of Candidates	Number of Candidates eligible for rebate	Total cost of rebates at 50% of \$10k	Average rebate for candidates at \$10k		Number of candidates getting max rebate		
				Women	Men	Women	Men	ALL
2007	55	48	\$62,745.58	\$2,103.19	\$1,036.77	2	3	5
2011	47	46	\$55,396.31	\$1,766.43	\$1,039.43	1	0	1
2015	60	56	\$76,323.95	\$1,732.17	\$1,180.05	1	3	4
TOTAL			\$194,465.84	\$1,867.26	\$1,085.42	4	6	10

Option 2: Election Expense Rebate on Personal Expenses of up to \$6,000.								
Election Year	Number of Candidates	Number of candidates eligible for rebate	Total cost of rebates at 50% of \$6k	Average rebate for candidates at \$6k		Number of candidates getting max rebate		
				Women	Men	Women	Men	ALL
2007	55	48	\$45,785.69	\$1,521.08	\$798.95	5	7	12
2011	47	46	\$48,158.03	\$1,471.48	\$918.81	2	5	7
2015	60	56	\$63,558.91	\$1,296.15	\$1,011.95	3	5	8
TOTAL			\$157,502.63	\$1,429.57	\$909.90	10	17	27

APPENDIX D: Interim Report

Please find following the Interim Report of the Special Committee to Increase the Representation of Women in the Legislative Assembly. Committee Report 14-18(3), March 12, 2019.



18th Legislative Assembly of the Northwest Territories

Special Committee to Increase the Representation of Women in the Legislative Assembly

Interim Report

Chairperson: Julie Green
MLA Yellowknife Centre

**MEMBERS OF THE SPECIAL COMMITTEE TO
INCREASE THE REPRESENTATION OF WOMEN
IN THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY**

Ms. Julie Green
MLA Yellowknife Centre
Chair

Mr. Tom Beaulieu
MLA Tu Nedhe - Wiilideh

Hon. Caroline Cochrane
MLA Range Lake

Mr. Michael Nadli
MLA Deh Cho

Mr. Herbert Nakimayak
MLA Nunakput

Hon. Louis Sebert
MLA Thebacha

COMMITTEE STAFF

Jennifer Franki-Smith
Committee Clerk

Cathleen Knotsch
Committee Advisor

March 12, 2019.

SPEAKER OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

Mr. Speaker:

Your Special Committee to Increase the Representation of Women in the Legislative Assembly is pleased to provide its *Interim-Report on Increasing the Representation of Women in the Legislative Assembly* and commends it to the House.



Julie Green
Chairperson
Special Committee to Increase the
Representation of Women in the Legislative Assembly

**SPECIAL COMMITTEE TO
INCREASE THE REPRESENTATION OF WOMEN
IN THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY**

**INTERIM REPORT
ON INCREASING THE REPRESENTATION OF WOMEN
IN THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY**

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Contents

<u>INTRODUCTION</u>	1
<u>SPECIAL COMMITTEE MANDATE</u>	2
<u>DISCUSSION</u>	2
<u>WOMEN'S CANDIDACY</u>	7
<u>Recommendation 1</u>	9
<u>Recommendation 2</u>	9
<u>CAMPAIGN SCHOOLS</u>	9
<u>Recommendation 3</u>	11
<u>CONSENSUS GOVERNMENT</u>	12
<u>Recommendation 4</u>	13
<u>POLITICAL EDUCATION</u>	13
<u>Recommendation 5</u>	14
<u>WORK-LIFE BALANCE</u>	14
<u>Recommendation 6</u>	16
<u>Recommendation 7</u>	16
<u>NEXT STEPS</u>	17
<u>USEFUL RESOURCES</u>	17

SPECIAL COMMITTEE TO INCREASE THE REPRESENTATION OF WOMEN IN THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

INTERIM REPORT ON INCREASING THE REPRESENTATION OF WOMEN IN THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

INTRODUCTION

The Legislative Assembly of the Northwest Territories (NWT) has the lowest percentage of women Members of any Canadian legislature. NWT voters elected two women to the Assembly in 2015, or 10.5 percent of Members. By comparison, Nunavut has six women Members, or 27.3 percent, and Yukon seven women Members, representing 36.8 percent.

On March 8, 2018, the Legislative Assembly of the NWT adopted a motion to increase the representation of women in the Legislative Assembly to 20 percent by 2023 and 30 percent by 2027. The Assembly created the Special Committee to Increase the Representation of Women in the Legislative Assembly and tasked it with identifying a wide range of strategies to achieve these goals.

The Special Committee began work on November 28, 2018, and has since held several public hearings, received written submissions and additional requests for meetings with interest groups. Overwhelmingly, we heard that women face many obstacles to running for elected office in the Northwest Territories. In addition, we heard that initiatives to assist women prepare for participation in politics are far too few and infrequent. The Special Committee also heard that the Legislative Assembly should be more family-friendly.

Given this feedback, we decided to provide the public with an interim-report focused on systemic barriers to women's full participation in the NWT's political life.

While the Special Committee's work is not complete, we are sharing what we have heard and recommendations intended to improve conditions for women's engagement in politics. A final report will be tabled before the end of the 18th Legislative Assembly. It will include discussion and recommendations on electoral processes and legislative change.

SPECIAL COMMITTEE MANDATE

On March 8, 2018, the Legislative Assembly unanimously passed Motion 13-18(3) Increasing Women's Participation in the Legislative Assembly. This motion calls on the Members of the Legislative Assembly to

- support "the goal of increasing women's representation in the Legislative Assembly to 20 percent by 2023 and 30 percent by 2027"; "work together and individually, to identify and implement a wide range of strategies, including positive action, public debate, and training and mentoring for women as leaders, to achieve these goals".

On November 1, 2018, the Legislative Assembly adopted a motion and created the Special Committee to Increase the Representation of Women in the Legislative Assembly. The Terms of Reference detail the Special Committee's tasks and include the following:

- The Special Committee is committed to consult with relevant interest groups within the Northwest Territories, in Canada and internationally, as appropriate.
- The Special Committee will consider relevant studies or reports aimed at increasing the representation of women including the Tabled Document 208-18(3) Discussion Paper - "Temporary Special Measures" To Increase the Representation of Women in the NWT Legislative Assembly.
- The Special Committee will prepare a report and present it to the House no later than the first day of the final sitting of the 18th Legislative Assembly.
- The report should identify, describe, and where appropriate, make recommendations with respect to:
 - The barriers that prevent women from running, incentives that mitigate these barriers, along with incentives to increase the representation of women in the Northwest Territories Legislative Assembly;
 - Solutions designed to increase women's representation in the 20th Legislative Assembly to 20 percent, and in the 21st Legislative Assembly to 30 percent; and
 - Changes to any current rules of the Legislative Assembly; and current and related legislation, or policies and programs of the Government of the Northwest Territories and the Legislative Assembly.

DISCUSSION

The Speaker of the NWT Legislative Assembly tabled a report to generate discussion on how to increase women's representation. The discussion paper "Temporary Special

Measures to Increase the Representation of Women in the NWT Legislative Assembly” presents a model based on the system used in Samoa, which amended its constitution to guarantee a minimum number of seats for women. The paper describes how this system could be applied to activate increased women’s participation in our legislature.

Worldwide, governments and political parties have adopted various measures to increase representation by women. These range from constitutional or legislated requirements to voluntary targets set by political parties. Studies show that mandatory or guaranteed seats produce significantly higher numbers and quicker results than voluntary targets. Additionally, more women are elected in systems with proportional representation than in “first-past-the-post” systems such as Canada’s and the NWT’s, where voters indicate on a ballot the candidate of their choice, and the candidate who receives the most votes, wins.

Taiwan (Republic of China) is an interesting example. The state adopted reserved seats for women in the 1950s and was one of the earliest countries in the world to do so. Of Taiwan’s 113 seats, 73 represent single-member-districts elected much as they are in Canada, 34 are filled from party lists on the basis of a nationwide vote for proportional representation, and six seats are reserved for aboriginal representatives from three districts.

Voluntary quotas are not an option in electoral systems without political parties, such as our own consensus government. If guaranteed seats are deemed necessary in the NWT, they would have to be legislated as suggested in the Speaker’s discussion paper.

Before the creation of Nunavut in 1999, an appointed implementation commission recommended a gender-equal Legislative Assembly. A man and a woman would be elected by all voters in each district. The proposal was put to a non-binding public vote in May 1997, resulting in 57 percent of ballots against the idea. Had the system been implemented, Nunavut’s Assembly would have been the world’s first gender-equal, democratically-elected legislature. Currently, six of 22 Members (27 percent) of Nunavut’s Legislative Assembly are women.

Electoral systems cannot be the sole tool to increase women’s representation because the social, cultural, political, historical and economic realities of each jurisdiction will influence the effects that measures and incentives have on women’s participation. Changing the workplace by providing opportunities for work-life balance also can have a positive effect on increasing the share of women in Legislative Assemblies.

Political Participation

The percentage of women in national legislatures has become a standard measure of a country’s achievement in women’s political participation. The presence of women in

legislatures is considered essential to encouraging citizen engagement and building a representative democracy, because women represent half the population.

The number of women in legislatures is increasing throughout the world. The East African country of Rwanda tops the global list with 49 women holding 61.3 percent of the seats in the national legislature. Cuba is second with 53.2 percent, Bolivia third at 53.1 percent, and Mexico is fourth with 48.2 percent. The thirteen countries with representation of women above 40 percent include the Nordic countries Sweden, Finland and Norway, but also Grenada, Namibia, Costa Rica, South Africa and Senegal. When looking at regional averages, the Nordic countries lead with 42.3 percent, followed by the Americas with 30.3 percent, and Europe with 26.5 percent, excluding the Nordic countries.

In 2018, Quebec voters elected 52 women to its National Assembly of 125 seats, or 41.6 percent, the highest in Canada. In the same year, Ontario voters elected 49 women to take 39.5 percent of seats in Queen's Park. In British Columbia, where 111 women ran in the provincial election, 34 were elected, taking 38.5 percent of the seats. Canada's parliament has 90 women Members, representing 26.9 percent, ranking 59th globally.

Research determined that more women are elected in systems with party lists, proportional representation and large districts. Most political parties have introduced candidate quotas for women based on party internal decisions. However, obstacles reported in party systems include barriers in the candidate recruitment and selection process, party discipline and gender-biased media coverage. Tactics such as assigning first-time women candidates to ridings with strong incumbents are a disadvantage to women.

In non-partisan systems like the NWT's and Nunavut's, the individual candidate cannot rely on party support, or expect the barriers mentioned above. In the absence of political parties, candidates run as independents in consensus government.

What Women Bring to the Table

The critical threshold of women required in a legislature to bring about significant and lasting policy change is 30 per cent, according to the United Nations. Globally, 49 countries have exceeded that mark. As of November 2018, the percentage of women in legislatures worldwide was 24.1 percent.

Increasing the number of women in positions of political power affects many aspects of society. Differences in priorities have been studied, with findings that women members of parliament more often address issues of social policy, family policy, and care for the elderly or health care in their election campaigns than their male counterparts.

Research literature suggests that women politicians are more likely than men to advance women's rights in areas such as pay equity, violence against women, health care and family policy.

Researchers investigated the relationship between the growing number of women in Canada's ten provincial governments and changes in population health over time. The authors conclude that women in government can bring about desirable changes in reducing mortality rates by triggering specific types of government spending, including medical care, preventive care, post-secondary education, and social services.

Not all women Members of the Assembly prioritize and find the same solutions to the same problems. While research suggests that women's leadership may reduce partisan combativeness and advance issues of gender-equality, childcare and pensions, it cannot be assumed that women and men implement leadership in the same way, or that leadership styles are distinctly fixed to gender. One research project found women leaders tend to be more relationship-oriented, while their male counterparts were more task-oriented. However, women leaders also tend to abandon their styles when in male-dominated leadership roles.

Women in government appear to govern differently than men. Research suggests that women tend to interrupt less, pay closer attention to other people's non-verbal signs, and use a more collaborative governing style than men. Women also govern differently by behaviour, opinion and attitude, with consequences such as change in internal working procedures or encouragement for more trust in government, according to research.

Women legislators continue to embrace women, children and family as priority issues; men do not share these priorities as often. Research found that women and men legislators over time have been agreeing more on ideas on how to work and develop procedures and process improvements. However, when it comes to choosing subjects, women and men continue to have different priorities in the topics they wish to see addressed.

A Slow Process

The United Nations (UN) Commission on the Status of Women exists since 1946. The 1953 Convention on the Political Rights of Women adopted by the UN General Assembly is the first international treaty guaranteeing women be entitled to vote in all elections, be eligible for election to all publicly elected bodies, and be entitled to hold public office on equal terms with men.

In 1979, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) was adopted by the UN General Assembly and ratified by 189 states, including Canada. One of its 16 core provisions guarantees women equality in voting,

participation in government and organizations concerned with public and political life of a country.

The 2011 UN General Assembly Resolution on Women's Political Participation expressed concern that women worldwide continue to be marginalized from political activities due to "discriminatory laws, practices, attitudes and gender stereotypes, low levels of education, lack of access to health care and the disproportionate effect of poverty on women". This resolution reaffirms obligations of all states to protect human rights, recognizes the role of UN Women, its goal of gender equality and empowerment of women, and recognizes the important contributions "women have made towards the achievement of representative, transparent and accountable Governments in many countries".

Several indexes have been developed to measure gender-equity worldwide. The UN 'Gender-related Development Index', the World Economic Forum 'Gender Gap Index', the International Save the Children Alliance 'Mothers' Index' and the Social Watch 'Gender Equity Index', all rank countries by the number of women in parliament. The rankings are reported on the Inter-Parliamentary Union's website <http://www.ipu.org>.

The pace at which women have been elected to legislatures worldwide has been called 'glacial.'

What We Have Heard

We heard that the essential voices of women are missing in the NWT Legislative Assembly, its Committees, and Cabinet. The Special Committee received passionate and well-informed calls for the Assembly to take action to increase women's participation.

We also heard that equal representation can make a difference, that there is awareness that women's leadership gives strength to and improves political decision-making. When women are equally represented, multiple viewpoints are taken into account and conduct tends to be more respectful.

Cultural barriers, financial and other challenges to campaigning, access to information and knowledge on consensus government, and uncertainty about the responsibilities of Members of the Legislative Assembly were among the most common topics to arise during conversations in public hearings conducted by the Special Committee.

Encouragement and social support for candidates, more consideration for women's roles in the care of children and family, workshops on campaigning, helping young women to see politics as a career choice, and enhancing the Northern Studies curriculum were among the concrete suggestions to help overcome the obstacles women see on their path toward equal political participation.

The Committee has received specific requests to identify how the NWT Legislative Assembly's building can be changed to better accommodate women, and how policies could be improved to create a more women- and family-friendly environment.

WOMEN'S CANDIDACY

Canadian federal elections show that the most important factor in women getting elected is the decision to run for office in the first place. In 2015, of all Parliamentary candidates 29.9 percent were women – today, nearly the same amount, 27 percent, of Canada's Members of Parliament are women.

Since 1999, NWT elections had women candidates in only eight, nine or 10 of 19 ridings. The high was 10 candidates in 2007. In 2015, there were nine women candidates in nine of the 19 ridings – and two were elected.

Women must be willing to stand as candidates in order to be elected. The decision to become a candidate and run for a seat in an election is an individual choice, but women report many obstacles they must consider when choosing to run.

A 2014 study by the Inter-Parliamentary Union found that globally, the top five factors deterring women from entering politics are:

- Domestic responsibilities;
- Prevailing cultural attitudes regarding the roles of women in society;
- Lack of support from family;
- Lack of confidence; and
- Lack of finance.

Media can also play a role in women's participation in public life and politics whether at the local, regional or national level. Gendered comments, sexist jokes, labelling of women politicians, focussing on a woman's physical attributes and using stereotypes detract from women candidates' platforms and achievements.

Discussion is ongoing on how Indigenous communities are impacted by the gendered process of colonization, including the failure of mainstream Indigenous organizations to mobilize around these impacts. Indigenous women's experiences of colonization have had particularly negative impacts on their ability to achieve positions of power within Canadian or Indigenous governments or organizations, according to research.

Research has attempted to connect the historical stereotyping of Indigenous women to the current high numbers of unsolved crimes against them. Colonialist interpretations and misinterpretations based on ethnocentric views have contributed to stereotypes that in turn are said to have led to negligence in solving crimes against Indigenous women. Understanding how gender roles changed during the history of contact with a patriarchal

European colonial society, how it has contributed to today's high rate of violence against Indigenous women and how this in turn has contributed to the low representation of Indigenous women in political leadership is at the heart of some most recent research.

Women as Caretakers

Women in the NWT said one of the biggest barriers to their participation in politics is their role as caretakers of household and family. Overall, there was a strong sense that women are expected, and often expect of themselves, to be the caretaker of extended families. Their professional work and caring for family often leaves little time for preparing to participate in politics.

The Committee also heard about poverty and how it heightens the pressure on women to provide for children and family. We heard often that women provide financially for the extended family and have little to spend on themselves.

We have heard that men should not keep women at home to have babies and take care of the house. We have also heard that in today's world it is the women who have gone to school and have jobs.

Members have heard that stigma plays a big role in women's decision-making on political participation. Women explained that they felt that being a politician is still seen as a man's job, and therefore, many women shy away from political leadership as a choice for themselves.

Financial Risks of Campaigning

The Committee heard from many residents that deciding to run for election requires quitting full-time jobs or interrupting business activities. With the outcome of the campaign being unknown, they felt that the financial risk of running is too great.

Proposals to mitigate this risk include convincing employers to keep the position open and offer unpaid leave to employees who run for elected office. We also heard some women will not consider running for election because they do not want to take a pay cut and reduce their current level of income to the level of earnings made by a Member of the Legislative Assembly.

Fundraising strategies are impacted by the size of a riding and type of transportation required. Committee heard there is considerable effort required when running for election in ridings with small and fly-in communities to visit people and households.

Being reliant on flight schedules can even further extend the time away from home. For those who require childcare, the expenses are also higher. It was suggested that eligible electoral expenses include childcare expenses.

The resources required to cover far distances within one riding are a key concern. There was mention of an imbalance in the costs of campaigning amongst NWT's ridings, as for example, ridings within Yellowknife do not require much travel.

Recommendation 1

The Special Committee to Increase the Representation of Women in the Legislative Assembly recommends that the Legislative Assembly Board of Management consider childcare expenses as a Constituency Work Allowance Expense.

An important factor when discussing the extended time away from home due to necessary travel is the increase in number of days for which childcare is required, and the increase in related expenses. One former woman candidate explained she took her child along on her campaign tour, covering the extra travel, in this case airfare, in addition to accommodation expenses.

Recommendation 2

The Special Committee to Increase the Representation of Women in the Legislative Assembly recommends that the Legislative Assembly make childcare an allowable election expense.

CAMPAIGN SCHOOLS

The UN Women's programs on leadership and participation work with civil society to uphold women's rights, including the right to vote and campaign free from electoral violence. The programs advocate legislative and constitutional reforms to ensure women's fair access to all political areas. Training and empowerment are essential components of the UN Women's commitment to advance gender equality. The UN Women Training Centre offers training courses, programs and resources, including an eLearning campus and knowledge-sharing platforms.

Significant efforts to overcome barriers are being made by non-governmental organizations in Canada. A prominent example is Equal Voice, a multi-partisan organization dedicated to electing more women in all orders of government. Its Daughters of the Vote project is receiving \$3.8-million in federal support over three years to encourage young women to consider a career in politics.

In the Northwest Territories, the Status of Women Council has offered information on campaigning for many years. Starting in March 2019, the Status of Women Council and the Native Women's Association will pilot a new Campaign School curriculum. Additional initiatives currently ongoing include Women on the Ballot workshops provided in Yellowknife.

What We Have Heard

Training in leadership, public speaking and how to run a campaign are key suggestions the Committee received in all public hearings. The obstacles women identified, such as not being taught or encouraged to speak in public, lacking self-confidence, having no experience in campaigning, and no information on a Member's duties culminated in the expressed wish for workshops, training and learning opportunities in communities.

Leadership training for women was identified as an important tool to increase participation in politics. The Indigenous Women in Leadership program of the Banff Centre for Arts and Creativity was mentioned as a good example of a program for Indigenous women leaders.

The Committee also heard that women encounter the persistent perception that women who run for the first time are not likely to perform well. Women in particular noted that when first-timers run against male incumbents, the public reasoning of women's inexperience in predicting low performance is regarded a gender-based interpretation and a disincentive to potential women candidates. Gendered comments from the public are expected and predicted by the women we heard from. The perception of low chances of electoral success, particularly against male incumbents, is a disincentive to women.

We heard that women seek assistance in preparing for candidacy. Women asked for opportunities to gain knowledge and experience on how to handle the obstacles they must address and overcome before they feel ready to run for election. In particular women asked that the following initiatives be offered in communities:

- Provide a women's forum for discussion and exchange of ideas;
- Inform how to put women's issues on political agendas, locally or regionally;

- Help to organize meetings amongst women for the purpose of strategizing on how to promote women and make their voices heard;
- Train women how to
 - increase self-confidence;
 - speak in public;
 - respond to gendered comments.

Campaign Schools are known to community members. Participants in our public meetings had either attended one of the Status of Women Campaign Schools, or knew someone who had. The majority of references to the workshops were positive and pointed to specific content elements as useful information.

Several times we were told the Campaign Schools' work should be supported and expanded to accommodate the learning needs of women in communities. We heard at every public meeting women seek more knowledge about the scope of the task of being a candidate, and information on the candidacy process should be easily accessible. Many residents recommended that government should continue to offer campaign-readiness courses and workshops in communities, and bring educational events to the smaller communities rather than holding them only in the larger hubs.

Recommendation 3

The Special Committee to Increase the Representation of Women in the Legislative Assembly recommends that the Government of the Northwest Territories task and fund one or more independent individual(s) or organization(s) to deliver the Campaign School for Women initiatives throughout the Northwest Territories and offer more than two workshops in one fiscal year.

After all the feedback Committee received on the need for more information and training to help women to prepare to be candidates, we heard that more money needs to be invested into Campaign Schools initiatives.

For example, it was mentioned that a section on roles and responsibilities is a good start to provide needed information. Many women who came to our public meetings are board members in their home communities and already involved in decision-making positions. The women identified that they require additional and concrete information to move forward to compete for roles at the next level of government.

CONSENSUS GOVERNMENT

A recent poll found that there is a clear gap in self-reported political knowledge among men and women in Canada. A 2018 Abacus data study asked individuals how much they know about politics. Responses showed that women were 19 percent less likely than men to say they know a lot or a fair amount about politics. Research has shown that while men are likely to think they are qualified to run for office, women, even in positions of high professional achievement, remain reluctant to run because they are concerned they are not qualified enough.

The Committee heard that women in the NWT perceive themselves as having insufficient knowledge and understanding of political systems, and that they feel a strong need to have easier access to information on the NWT's political system. We heard there is need to improve and broaden women's access to information across the NWT, and to reach each community.

Committee heard that general education and information for candidates is needed in the following areas:

- Learning about the NWT political system;
- Hearing that politics can be a career;
- Understanding functions of the NWT Legislative Assembly;
- Knowing where to find information on how to become a Member of the Legislative Assembly;
- Being aware of the duties and responsibilities of a Member;
- Understanding the requirements to run for an elected seat;
- Understanding the type and depth of knowledge required before one runs for election;
- Learning and practicing public speaking as part of grade school education;
- Knowing where to find opportunities for leadership training for young women.

It was recommended that this information be presented in the form of pamphlets and a video. The format should be easily accessible in communities and in plain language. Information should be provided on tools such as session calendars, the technologies available at the Assembly, and ways to work remotely. The Committee suggests that this might be accomplished through additional and regular communications initiatives.

Recommendation 4

The Special Committee to Increase the Representation of Women in the Legislative Assembly recommends that the Legislative Assembly provide to the public a better understanding of the work of a Member, and make available a video, and other visual and written materials, including information on the prerequisites, roles and responsibilities, and benefits available to Members.

POLITICAL EDUCATION

Engaging women at a young age, we heard, is at the heart of getting women to participate in politics. Women had little recollection of learning about politics in school or during activities outside of school. Few women recalled any mention of 'politician' as a career choice during their school years. Information on what politicians do and how one becomes one appears to be absent in school curricula and extra-curricular activities.

Young women tend to be exposed to less political information than young men. Research found that regardless of whether the focus is on academic or extracurricular activities or media habits, women are less likely to be surrounded by political discussion and information. This information gap hinders young women's political ambition.

The Committee received feedback on school education and when to best educate students on political systems, including career opportunities. Women recommended including information on civics, consensus government and politics as a career choice in Grade 8 in order to reach women at a young age. In support of young women making career choices for leadership in politics, the Committee heard that it would be necessary to include information on careers in politics in school career programs.

Committee Members also heard words of caution. Being elected as a Member of the Legislative Assembly is a position with a time limit. An MLA serves a term of four years until the Assembly is dissolved for the next election. It was questioned if four years could even be considered a career; every Member faces the risk of not being re-elected.

The Northern Studies program, which is part of the Grade 10 NWT curriculum in high schools, includes learning about Canada's parliamentary system. We heard that it does not specifically teach about consensus government and not all schools carry out the program with the same intensity and focus. In cases where the program has left notable impression on the students, it was the teacher's special efforts that made the difference.

Visiting the Legislative Assembly was described as a highlight of learning in school. Involving MLAs in the classes of teaching the Northern Studies program was mentioned as an important hands-on experience.

Committee heard that teaching on consensus government could be intensified and that the Northern Studies program is a good opportunity to inform young students about career choices in politics. Women stressed that while the program is not gender-specific, it provides an excellent opportunity for young women to acquire knowledge on politics that they otherwise may not experience at this age.

Recommendation 5

The Special Committee to Increase the Representation of Women in the Legislative Assembly recommends that the Legislative Assembly take the necessary steps to assist in ensuring that information on the NWT's consensus government is made available to any group, organization or government in the Northwest Territories involved in teaching young women.

And further,

The Special Committee to Increase the Representation of Women in the Legislative Assembly recommends that the Legislative Assembly encourage its Members to be supportive of hands-on learning activities on consensus government such as school visits to the Legislative Assembly of the Northwest Territories.

WORK-LIFE BALANCE

The challenge of balancing work and life is magnified for women because women are most often the primary caregivers. Scheduling child care in an environment that requires short-notice adjustments to work schedules is challenging. Add the necessity for work travel and the outcome is a tricky negotiation among priorities.

Researchers have shown that there are factors that make a legislative job particularly challenging for mothers. Such challenges include not being able to take time off to take care of an infant, or to turn off the phone to spend uninterrupted time with children or family. Infant and toddler care may also not be available in close vicinity to the legislature requiring additional arrangements particularly to accommodate late sitting hours.

Research has given some attention to leave policies, employer-supported access to child care, alternative scheduling, and family support to enable work-life balance. However, it has been argued that much work remains to ensure that electoral politics do not present additional barriers to the participation of women.

Measures in Canadian Legislatures Supporting Work-life Balance

In 2016, the House of Commons and the Legislative Assembly of Alberta tasked committees with studying ways to make their legislatures more family-friendly. Each resulted in a report with seven recommendations, many looking to improve Members' schedules. In Alberta, as well as in the NWT, there was concern that votes scheduled at the end of a week's sitting could disrupt the travel arrangements of Members with constituencies furthest away from the Assembly.

Reconciling family and professional life applies to women and men equally, the Committee heard. The topic of sessional schedules and sitting hours was raised several times, often by those who had previously been Members.

We heard that the sessional schedule and long sitting hours did not accommodate women Members who had children and family at home outside of Yellowknife. Arrangements had to be made for child-care in the home community and it was not possible to combine family and work life in one location. Loneliness, we heard, is a hard fact in the lives of women MLAs who spend the weekdays far from their family, home community, riding or constituency.

Making the NWT Legislature Child-Friendly

Changes to facilities, installing change tables in washrooms, and quiet rooms for Members to care for children have been introduced in many public places. More than half of Canadian legislatures have installed change tables in washrooms, and several have designated quiet rooms, including Alberta, Manitoba and the House of Commons.

Daycare facilities are not available to all legislatures. Thirty-eight spaces for children aged between 18 months and five years are provided to Members of the House of Commons in Ottawa. Ontario's Legislature holds a membership to a corporate daycare that ensures a place is available should a Member wish to drop off their child at their own expense. Quebec considered opening an early childhood centre on site, but did not do so as the City of Quebec is already well-served with childcare spaces. Alberta is considering a daycare facility on the Legislature grounds.

Several legislatures allow infants or small children in the Chamber. British Columbia, Alberta, Manitoba and the House of Commons have either no restriction or have amended rules to allow for infants to be in the House during sittings.

The NWT Legislative Assembly currently has no family rooms, change tables or any physical features to accommodate small children on the premises. Members who wish to bring their children have no designated spaces to care for them.

The Committee heard that it is time to review how well the NWT Legislative Assembly allows Members to balance work and family life. Suggestions include a review of the building and its facilities with a view to accommodating women, childcare needs, family responsibilities and possible access issues such as special parking or wide enough doors to allow strollers to pass.

Recommendation 6

The Special Committee to Increase the Representation of Women in the Legislative Assembly recommends that the Legislative Assembly investigate practical measures to make the legislature family-friendly, explore the possibility of creating a family room, installing infant change devices in bathrooms, and improving signage indicating location of family-friendly facilities.

Parental leave and absences due to pregnancy or childbirth are considered acceptable absences in most jurisdictions in Canada, though not always formalized as parental leave but accepted under other leave options such as family or sick leave.

Recommendation 7

The Special Committee to Increase the Representation of Women in the Legislative Assembly recommends that the Legislative Assembly Board of Management make allowance for Members to be absent from the Assembly without financial penalty for up to four months due to pregnancy, childbirth or the care of a Member's child following birth or adoption.

Many jurisdictions have aimed to improve on their Assembly's family-friendliness. Setting parliamentary calendars early in the year is one measure that most legislatures have taken to allow Members to better predict their schedule.

Sitting hours have been adjusted to a four-day week schedule in Manitoba, Saskatchewan and the Yukon. Quebec reduced its schedule to a three-day week.

Late night sittings were eliminated in Manitoba, Saskatchewan and the Yukon. In other jurisdictions such as British Columbia, Ontario and Alberta, the frequency of evening sittings has been reduced. Several attempts have been made in Prince Edward Island and New Brunswick to make sitting hours more family-friendly, but to date hours have not been changed and evening sittings continue.

Proxy voting and pairing rules for voting enable Members of legislatures to be absent without impacting voting results. Proxy voting allows a Member to vote in her or his absence by delegating the vote to another representative. Most recently, the Parliament of the United Kingdom, in a briefing on 'baby leave', recommended to allow their Members who have had a baby or adopted a child to be entitled, but not required, to discharge their responsibility to vote by proxy.

The House of Commons, Manitoba and Ontario have pairing rules. This arrangement between two Members enables one to be absent without affecting the result of a vote. A Member of the opposition will agree to also not vote, therefore cancelling out the imbalance and avoiding the loss or win of a vote because of absence.

NEXT STEPS

The Special Committee to Increase the Representation of Women thanks everyone involved in the discussion of this topic, with particular thanks to those who provided their input and recommendations. We appreciate the feedback received and encourage further discussion and hearing from more groups.

The Committee will continue consultation, research further and will come forward with concrete recommendations to increase the representation of women in the Legislative Assembly of the NWT. The Committee will table its final report before the end of the 18th Legislative Assembly.

All committee reports and public submissions are available on the Legislative Assembly website: www.assembly.gov.nt.ca.

USEFUL RESOURCES

Northwest Territories

NWT Campaign School
www.statusofwomen.nt.ca
www.nativewomensnwt.com

Special Committee to Increase the Representation of Women in the NWT Legislative Assembly

<https://www.assembly.gov.nt.ca/content/special-committee-increase-representation-women>

What is Consensus Government

<https://www.assembly.gov.nt.ca/visitors/what-consensus>

Other

Daughters of the Vote

www.dauthersofthevote.ca

Equal Voice: Electing More Women in Canada

www.equalvoice.ca

Getting to the Gate Online Campaign School

www.gettingtothegate.com

Indigenous Women in Leadership

<https://www.banffcentre.ca/programs/indigenous-women-leadership>

UN Women

<http://www.unwomen.org/en>