

**Nova Scotia Provincial Council  
Catholic Women's League of Canada  
Legislation Annual Report for 2017**

I am pleased to report that there has been a marked increase in the number of councils submitting reports for the Legislation standing committee. In the Antigonish Diocese 17 councils sent in reports which is up from 8, last year. This represented 43% of the councils, as compared to 20% the previous year. The Halifax-Yarmouth Diocese also had an increase, from 9 councils reporting for 2016, to 14 councils in 2017. This was an increase to 44% from 27%. Councils continue to experience difficulty in getting members to take on a leadership role for the Legislation standing committee. In 2017, 48% of councils had no chairperson but many of these councils were able to submit a report of their activities under this committee. Presidents continue their efforts to encourage members to take on a leadership roles in Legislation.

Councils (44% ) reported that they continue to access Hansard to keep up to date on current Bills, especially those that support active resolutions. Many are in touch with government representatives at the federal, provincial and local levels, and they receive mail-outs from these representatives. About 30% of councils consider themselves well informed on issues being discussed by government at all levels and about 50% stated they were somewhat informed.

Two thirds of councils who reported, participated in the petition circulated by National Chairperson, Nancy Simms: *To Specifically Identify Hospice Palliative Care As A Defined Medical Service Covered Under The Canada Health Act*. The 32,000 signatures collected were presented in the House of Commons by MP Cathy MacLeod from British Columbia.

There was little action taken on Resolution 2017.03, which requested the removal of excise tax on all child safety products, through Bill C-254 which is currently before the House of Commons. Councils voiced support of Resolution 2017.04: *Coercion of Conscience for Health Care Professionals*. They educated their members and wrote letters to the Prime Minister expressing their support for health care workers.

Members discussed and monitored issues associated with the various Bills before the House of Commons. Some councils wrote letters to the prime Minister and the Attorney General in support of the National president's letter, which urged the government to provide assurances that the Catholic viewpoint would not be viewed as hate of those living with gender dysphoria. This was in response to Bill C-16, *An Act To Amend the Canadian Human Rights Act And The Criminal Code*.

Many members signed petition e-673, in support of Resolution 2016.05, *To Amend The Canada Health Act To Include Home Care As An Insured Health Service*. Some councils invited guest speakers to educate their members and the public on the availability of home care in their community. Members volunteered at their local hospices and supported them financially.

Councils in Nova Scotia have been monitoring provincial legislation concerning cyber-bullying, the abortion pill being made available at no cost, sentencing for violent offences against Aboriginal women, assisted suicide, and issues surrounding the legalization of marijuana. Councils are looking into the future and would like to explore issues surrounding, clearer labelling of additives in food, mental health and euthanasia deception.

The majority of councils felt that all levels of the League “ do an excellent job in keeping us informed and are certainly organized to make sure we are given the opportunity to access all information on every issue that is important to us”. Perhaps there was a breakdown in communications for the few councils who stated that they wanted to receive communiques in a more timely manner. Councils mentioned that they found the League magazines and the communiques very helpful in keeping up to date with the work of the League in various areas.

The communiques issued by Nancy Simms, National chairperson of Legislation were very helpful in keeping me up to date. I informed members about them and/or used excerpts from them in my communiques.

In my role as provincial Legislation Chairperson, I sent out two communiques in 2017. In my first communique I updated the members on the status of Bills before the House of Commons which supported active resolutions. I urged the members to sign both the e-petition in support of home care and the paper petition in support of palliative care. In my second communique I explained what Legislation is and the why and how of getting involved in the legislative process. I pointed out that the National website had two excellent workshops that the members could access. One is titled *What Do You Stand For* and the other is the *Workshop on Legislation and Resolutions*. I reminded councils that talk is not enough but that through their active participation they can make a difference.

My past two years as Legislation chairperson has been a huge learning experience for me. I accepted this position on the provincial level because I had never been involved in this committee and I was looking for a challenge. I certainly learned a great deal about Legislation and did my best to pass on that knowledge to the members through my communiques. I urge you to save these communiques for reference for future Legislation chairpersons.

My sincere thanks to my Diocesan counterparts, Janet Terrio and Wanda Bruckschwaiger for your timely reports and the work you did in keeping your councils informed.

In my report last year I mentioned that we had many challenges before us in trying to get members involved in the legislative process. The statistics indicate that we have made considerable progress with nearly double the councils reporting in 2017, as compared to 2016. I congratulate all the councils who helped make this happen. Keep up the good work and stay positive .

### **Together We Are Making A Difference**

Respectfully Submitted

Toosje Van de Sande  
Provincial Legislation Chairperson  
2015-2017