

HANSARD

NOVA SCOTIA HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY

COMMITTEE

ON

HUMAN RESOURCES

Tuesday, May 28, 2019

COMMITTEE ROOM

Women's Economic Security in Nova Scotia

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STANDING COMMITTEE ON HUMAN RESOURCES

Brendan Maguire (Chair)
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Rafah DiCostanzo
Alana Paon
Brad Johns
Lenore Zann
Tammy Martin

[Brendan Maguire was replaced by Hon. Iain Rankin]
[Tammy Martin was replaced by Lisa Roberts.]

In Attendance:

Judy Kavanagh
Legislative Committee Clerk

Gordon Hebb
Chief Legislative Counsel

WITNESSES

Nova Scotia Advisory Council on the Status of Women

Stephanie MacInnis-Langley, Executive Director

Canadian Union of Public Employees

Angella MacEwen, Economist

Dalhousie University

Dr. Karen Foster, Department of Sociology and Social Anthropology

Department of Labour and Advanced Education

Tracey Barbrick, Associate Deputy Minister

Cynthia Yazbek, Senior Executive Director, Labour Services



House of Assembly
Nova Scotia

HALIFAX, TUESDAY, MAY 28, 2019

STANDING COMMITTEE ON HUMAN RESOURCES

10:00 A.M.

CHAIR

Brendan Maguire

VICE-CHAIR

Suzanne Lohnes-Croft

THE CHAIR (Suzanne Lohnes-Croft): Order, I call this meeting of the Standing Committee on Human Resources to order. My name is Suzanne Lohnes-Croft. I am the Vice-Chair, acting as Chair today. I am also the MLA for Lunenburg.

In addition to appointments to agencies, boards and commissions and our agenda setting, we will hear from witnesses regarding women's economic security in Nova Scotia.

Please note that this meeting will run until 12:30 p.m., to allow for time for our agenda setting.

I would like to remind everyone in the room to turn off your phones or put them on vibrate. Photographs are allowed to be taken only by members of the media. Should we need to exit, we will exit at Granville Street and go up to the Grand Parade and meet by St. Paul's Church. Coffee and washrooms are in the anteroom.

I'm going to ask that members introduce themselves.

[The committee members introduced themselves.]

THE CHAIR: We are going to leave our committee business until after we have heard from our witnesses. Our topic today, as I said earlier is women's economic security in Nova Scotia. I am going to ask the witnesses to introduce themselves, and then, we'll come back to you, Ms. MacInnis-Langley, for opening remarks.

[The committee witnesses introduced themselves.]

THE CHAIR: Ms. MacInnis-Langley.

STEPHANIE MACINNIS-LANGLEY: My name is Stephanie, as I said, and I am the Executive Director of the Status of Women Office. I'm really pleased to be here today to contribute to the discussion on women's economic security, such a timely and important topic.

Our focus today is women; it's pretty exciting. I want to emphasize that it's also about a stronger Nova Scotia. Women are 51 per cent of Nova Scotia's population, they make up 49.1 per cent of our labour force. Young women have higher rates of high school and post-secondary school completion. Women business entrepreneurs or owners are our strongest growth pattern in entrepreneurs in Nova Scotia. Women hold 32 per cent of senior management positions, and 33 per cent of Nova Scotia's elected MLAs and 27 per cent of Nova Scotia's municipal leaders are women.

Women are more likely to earn the lowest wages, have precarious employment, and are at the highest risk of violent victimization, with Aboriginal women being three times more likely to experience violence.

We need to understand the underlying root cause is gender inequality. The United Nations sustainability goals for 2030 identify gender equality as one of the 17 key development goals that together can end poverty, promote prosperity and well-being for all, and protect the planet.

Moving to a more equal Nova Scotia advances all of Nova Scotia. Gender equality is an economic issue. Canada could add up to \$150 billion to its GDP by 2026 by increasing women's labour force participation, and Nova Scotia could see a \$2.3 billion increase.

The concept of human security outlines the interconnectedness between personal safety and economic security. They impact one another both as a cause and an effect. Economic security can be a risk factor for victimization and a deterrent from leaving a domestic violence relationship. Women and their children who leave domestic violence relationships are five times more likely to live in poverty than if they had stayed in the relationship. These challenges are not unique to Nova Scotia. Cultural norms, societal expectations, entrenched beliefs of women's roles, and the reality of violence against women have a major impact on women's lives. These intersect with systemic forms of discrimination, particularly impacting indigenous women, racialized women, women living with disabilities, LGBTQS women, and older women.

During my 10 years with the Status of Women, I have seen significant progress through successive governments, and it has been part of what has led to much of the progress we see, such as the advances we're making in child care, pre-Primary education, pregnancy leave protections, and gradual improvements to the Maintenance Enforcement Program.

I have a small team at the Status of Women. There are only eight of us. We work collaboratively with government departments, agencies, academics, community groups, and women-serving organizations to advance the vision of gender equality.

The Status of Women office is leading Standing Together, Nova Scotia's coordinated approach to preventing domestic violence. This is a \$9 million multi-year initiative to develop a coordinated plan for change. It's built on learning, innovation, and evidence. Just last month, we announced our first grants, the prevention and shift grants.

By focusing on prevention, Standing Together will examine the underlying contributing factors such as gender inequality, economic insecurity, and gender norms, and collaborate with community and across government to build knowledge and capacity for change.

This work is powerful and it's critical to a stronger Nova Scotia. This government-wide initiative sees the engagement of multiple departments, agencies, and community organizations all working together under the leadership of a policy office focused on gender equality. This is a powerful example of gender-based analysis in action.

We have served an active role in the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls, including supporting the Mi'kmaq Women Leaders Network, and ensuring that families were at the centre of the inquiry.

Our non-partisan Campaign School for Women, which began in 2004, support women to pursue leadership opportunities and elected office. This past year, more than 100 diverse women took part in our three-day campaign school. I have provided the committee with resource kits that I think you'll find really interesting.

Since 2009, the Status of Women has supported women to pursue education through WINS. It is our bursary program called Women Innovating in Nova Scotia. We do that program in partnership with the Nova Scotia Community College Foundation. WINS helps women pursue education and opportunities in STEM fields - science, technology, engineering, and math - which offer a higher level of income security, which is then life-changing for their prospects. I have provided to you the most recent publication on WINS in your packages.

We are honoured to have the responsibility of supporting and providing operational funding to transition houses, women's centres, and the Nova Scotia Native Women's Association, as well as Alice House.

Government recently announced new core funding to support for the first time ever the Nova Scotia Native Women's Association. The Nova Scotia Native Women's Association will receive the same funding that all women's centres in the province receive. We have also funded additional funding for the Strait Area Women's Place, which has been at a lower funding rate for quite some time.

We provide over \$8 million in stable core funding to these grassroots women's organizations. The province has directed \$5.2 million from the National Housing Strategy in support of capital projects. I am very excited - since I built a purpose-built shelter - to tell you that we are building two brand new purpose-built shelters in this province: one for Bryony House and one for Chrysalis House in Kentville. The ground-breaking will happen in 2019.

We've also built two brand new second-stage housing facilities: one in Amherst and one here in metro. The one in metro is with the Mi'kmaw Native Friendship Centre.

Earlier, I spoke about the interlinkage of safety and economic security and the challenge of this complexity in the context of domestic violence. I want to emphasize that human resilience and compassionate support are the bridges that assist women to move away from victimization towards independence, autonomy, and security for both the woman and her children. This is the work of the Status of Women.

Service providers like Alice House - Nova Scotia's largest second stage housing program in this province - are important contributors. As a responsive and creative organization, they have recently developed an innovative approach to their supports. Alice House's self-guided resource called Alice on the Go allows women to engage with the house's staff in this important therapeutic support while pursuing their employment and education paths. This innovative resource is a key support to women on their journey to economic security.

I would like to take a moment to introduce Ms. Heather Byrne, Executive Director of Alice House, who is here with us today. I want to congratulate Heather on her innovative leadership since she has taken over Alice House. She would be delighted, when you're ready, if you have any questions or any questions the committee might have.

In closing, I would suggest that the complexities of gender, gender stereotypes, and the societal construct of gender norms will require each of us to be continuously thoughtful about human security and be cognizant in all our decision making and discussions now and in the future.

THE CHAIR: Ms. MacEwen, do you have some opening remarks?

ANGELLA MACEWEN: Thank you very much. I'm really excited to be here. I'm in Ottawa now, but I actually went to school here in Nova Scotia at Saint Mary's and Dalhousie, so it's nice to be back.

The research package that you have shows you all of the statistics. Dr. Karen Foster is going to go through some of that. We know that women tend to make less money. They tend to be more economically insecure than men. They tend to have lower income throughout their lives across the age spectrum.

What I'm going to talk about are the public policies that can make that better or that can exacerbate it. As a representative from the Canadian Union of Public Employees, I think that public services are one of the key answers to improving women's economic security, being that fundamental floor for people so that they don't fall through the cracks and help them recover from catastrophic periods in their life where they need that support and that help. Women are affected by public services both as clients and as workers because a lot of public services are care work, where women are overwhelmingly disproportionately represented as workers.

If we look at the lifespan of people from cradle to grave, we can see all of the public services that affect people's lives, from the availability of midwives and appropriate public health services for young children to affordable child care, health care - the completion of health care as Tommy Douglas originally envisioned with Pharmacare and dental care. Canada is the only country in the world that has universal health care but doesn't have universal drug coverage and doesn't have dental care. As an ACORN activist once said, do you think that your eyes aren't part of your body? Do you think your teeth aren't part of your body? Why don't we have coverage when we need health care?

What happens is that people delay going to the doctor. They can't afford to deal with it themselves, so they end up in acute care. They end up sicker and it costs the system more money to deal with that problem in the long run, and the person has a lower quality of life. When we think about people's lives and the services that we need to provide them and that we have committed to providing them in a holistic manner, we understand that spending up front on these quality public services not only helps people maintain economic security by avoiding these big expenditures in their lives, but it also saves the public purse money in the long run, as well, because we're dealing with problems before they arise. We're dealing with preventive care.

Something that's going to be a growing concern for Nova Scotia and most provinces actually is long-term care. Do we have enough workers to provide long-term care? Do we have enough spaces for people to be in long-term care near their families so that they can continue to have the support that they need from their families?

We need to invest in all of these aspects of care, and we need to think about it from a social determinants of health perspective, where we are actually reducing the cost of poverty and of acute care in the long run, and we're providing the support that people need throughout their lives. We need to think about this as women as workers.

[10:15 a.m.]

What we've seen, in 1983, only 11 per cent of CUPE members were part-time workers and in 2018, last year, a full one-third of them were part-time. This mirrors what we've seen in public sector work where there's growing precarity actually in the broader public sector where people are laid off, where they're contracted out because of privatization. What that leads to is a worse condition for the women who are workers providing that care, providing that work, and a worse outcome for the people receiving the services.

When we have that shortcut, what you see is when my grandmother-in-law was in hospital care in Antigonish and they didn't have enough people to make sure that she was eating her lunches and her foods, she got sicker when she was in the hospital. She had four kids who were trying to patchwork that together, but they weren't able to, so she fell and broke her hip because she was dizzy from not having eaten properly.

If we had the care in place, that would have saved her from breaking her hip, that would have saved her children the anxiety of trying to provide that care, and it would have saved the cost of additional time in the hospital bed. These are the types of investments that we need to make, this is the type of thinking that we need to apply. Rather than the short-term thinking of cutting costs, we need to apply the long-term thinking of providing services, from a service perspective.

Women in care work often have low-paying benefits as well, so they're more reliant on partners who are abusive. This economic insecurity - I'm really glad that you brought that up, because that economic insecurity keeps women in dangerous relationships and makes them far more vulnerable when they try to leave.

The Canadian Labour Congress and unions in Canada have a whole campaign around domestic violence at work that I think you've seen here, and I think it's really important to think about it that way.

What else can governments do? They can look at proactive pay equity legislation and look at how workers in care fields are paid less than their qualifications, the comparable unions, so instead of having a process where someone has to complain that their pay isn't fair, you can have this proactive process where you're doing that analysis up front.

You can have strong labour legislation which can make a really important difference for women. Ontario very briefly brought in equal pay for temporary and part-time workers, which had a huge impact in raising wages for women actually. It also made

it less advantageous for employers to hire workers on a part-time or temporary basis, it gave them more of an incentive to hire full-time workers. You remove that incentive that it's cheaper to hire part-time or temporary, you make sure that they have to have the pay and benefits prorated for the part-time and temporary workers, and then that actually ends up helping women a lot.

Also the union advantage, women in unions, unions tend to equalize the pay that women get so the pay gap for unionized women is 84 cents on the dollar, compared to non-unionized women at 70 cents on the dollar, so we tend to see a smaller pay gap for unionized women.

What exacerbates this, when we don't have an intersectional approach - I'm also really glad to see the Status of Women talking about Indigenous women. I saw the materials that talked about Indigenous women but what we didn't see in the materials is racialized women. There are African Nova Scotian women who are disproportionately affected by poverty and young women especially, Indigenous women and African Nova Scotian women, are more frequently jailed, they're more frequently vulnerable in economically vulnerable positions. The thing about intersectionality that sometimes people don't get is that it's not just, oh "and women and LGBTQ," these people are differently situated and encounter different barriers than other people, so you need to talk to people in those communities and look at situations from their perspectives so that you understand what those barriers are and how you can remove them.

The word actually comes from a legal case in the United States where Black women were told that they couldn't bring a case to the Supreme Court because there was no legal framework for their discrimination where a company hired women, but only white women and Black men, and they said they're discriminating against us because they're not hiring Black women. They said, no you can't - there's no legal framework to join those two types of discrimination, but people experience those two types of discrimination at the same time and it has different outcomes for them. We need to implement a fully intersectional analysis into this insecurity, because if we don't, we miss the ways that people are being locked out of economic security, out of opportunity.

Just one final point is that privatization and social impact bonds tend to increase inequality and they tend to lock people out of economic security because what you're doing is, you're taking public services and you're adding a profit motive.

What we've seen - there's a pilot project in Manitoba around providing midwife supports to Indigenous women. When you set up the impact, the impact should be the number of people that have services now that didn't before, what the private sector will do is pick the easiest people to serve so that they can have that impact. So you cherry-pick the people that are easiest for you to get your numbers and you end up leaving the hardest to serve behind.

What government should be doing with public services is making an effort to reach out to the hardest to serve first. Service should be the primary motive, not profit, because whenever you get profit into the mix on public services, it skews the delivery and ends up increasing inequality, instead of what public services are supposed to do, which is reduce inequality. Thank you.

THE CHAIR: Dr. Foster, do you have a presentation?

DR. KAREN FOSTER: Yes, there are slides behind you and I think people should have them in their package.

I'm glad to be here and to be able to talk about women's economic security. It's a topic that I try to bring up outside the classroom with very little success - at the gym and on playgrounds - so I'm really happy to actually have a captive audience who is supposed to listen to me. (Laughter)

I want to look at the concept of economic security. The way that I approach it in my research and in my teaching is that it's a concept that has several dimensions. When we think about economic security, we might think immediately of how much money someone has, but it's much more complex than that.

Across all of my own research - and also the literature that I use to teach and conduct my own research - what stands out for me is that what people care about the most when it comes to their income and what matters the most to quality of life is not necessarily the level of income, but the stability of income over time - its predictability and stability. I've seen this finding going back decades, and I just came off of doing my own survey in Atlantic Canada, and it holds true that people place the stability of their income above its level in terms of how important it is to them. If you think about it, it matters in concrete terms - in terms of being able to set a budget, pay your rent, that kind of thing. You can live within your means if you know that they are going to be stable.

There are other dimensions we have to consider beyond income level and income stability. As some of my fellow witnesses have mentioned, care responsibilities - you can think of them as something that intervenes in your ability to go out and make money. They also cost a lot if you work outside the home, especially full time.

Although we're seeing great gains in terms of how much men are contributing to the care of children and elders and to domestic work inside the home, it's still not equal. Women do the lion's share of domestic work and child-rearing. They do, no matter how much we want to think that it's changing.

We also have to include in that the care for people with disabilities or any kind of complex needs. The survey that I just finished suggests that of Atlantic Canadians who live in households with other people, one in 10 has a family member that needs assistance with the tasks of daily living, which is higher than I expected, but also kind of makes sense.

We can assume that this is mostly women who are bearing the brunt of this extra labour and it would be interfering in their ability to work outside the home.

The other thing that we have to think about when we think about economic security, which is related back to income stability, is job protections - whether your job is protected, like if you are protected against arbitrary dismissal by a union or by labour standards. If you don't have job protections, then your economic security is weakened.

Pensions are similar, your income level is a lot different if you have to save for retirement on your own, as opposed to having a pension that your employer contributes to. We have to look at that when we try to assess people's economic security. If you think about the baseline recommendation that you're supposed to be piling 10 per cent to 15 per cent of your income since your 20s, a lot of people are not in the position to do that if they don't have pensions through their employer.

Benefits are similar, medical and dental benefits like Angella was talking about. If you're dipping into your income for expenses that are not optional, then your income level doesn't mean a whole lot. As we know anecdotally, people start to treat those medical expenses as if they are optional, they choose to put their kids first instead of dealing with their own health problems. That's how I think we have to think about economic security.

This chart is an old one, but I use it just to illustrate a concept of occupational segregation. You have more up-to-date data in the research package. What I want to point out is just that men and women do different jobs. Even though we have pushes toward equality across industries and across different types of education, we still find that men and women segregate into different types of occupations, and those different types of occupations have different pay levels. They also have different pay gaps within them. This just adds a whole lot of complexity to the idea of intersectionality, but the industry that you're in and the occupation that you're in really impacts your economic security a lot and those things are all gendered.

Sociologists and economists have looked at this and tried to figure out why people end up in different positions, why occupations are gendered and also why the pay gap persists. You can control for all sorts of factors - education, where you come from, what your parents did, your socio-economic status - and there's always this bit that's left over that we have to attribute to discrimination. Sometimes it doesn't show up as "we don't hire women", but the fact is there are industry cultures, there are workplace cultures - your workplace has a culture, mine does, too - that are not welcoming to certain kinds of people.

The same is true in certain positions that are feminized, they are not welcoming to men, so there are workplace cultures. It just so happens that a lot of the high-paying occupations are not friendly to women. You can see it reflected in the statistics but also in people's narratives about trying to break into certain occupations.

I also wanted to talk a little bit about part-time work. These are calculations from the January 2019 Labour Force Survey so you can do these once a month, if you so choose. Women are more likely than men to work part time, about twice as likely, so 24 per cent of women in the labour force versus 12 per cent of men work part time.

Statistics Canada does a neat thing where they ask people why they're working part time and people who are interested in precarious work follow these stats to see if there's an increase in involuntary part time, so if there's an increase in the percentage of people who are saying that I would like full-time work but I can't find it. Over time there has been an increase in that, it's slight.

One of the gendered things I wanted to point out is that women are more likely to say that they're working part time because they're caring for children or because of other personal or family responsibilities, which I interpret as caring for elders - 18 per cent of women say they're doing one of those two things, versus only 5 per cent of men.

Another interesting kind of gendered issue here is that Statistics Canada calls those things voluntary and then things like business conditions are not voluntary - child care is not really voluntary. Those are part-time patterns.

Part-time work introduces another complexity that makes it difficult for policy to deal with because some women and men alike would really like to work part time in order to be able to take care of their children part time. If policy is all directed toward getting people into full-time work, that does ignore a portion of the population who would prefer to have a little bit more flexibility. How do you build in flexibility while also maintaining economic security? That for me is a big policy challenge.

[10:30 a.m.]

Unemployment, I'll just speak to briefly. It's fairly low. Right now, women tend to have a lower unemployment rate than men when you look at the statistics. Some of that, maybe a lot of it, is because women are more likely to just not be in the labour force instead of saying that they're unemployed. Also, it might have something to do with the fact that women are more likely to be unionized now than men. If you look at the long-term trends on that chart, women are in the red, and men are in the blue. Men used to be a lot more likely to be unionized than women, and now the pattern has reversed. Everybody is a whole lot less likely to be in a union, but women are more likely to be.

The survey that I just did in Atlantic Canada shows the same thing, especially I think because in our region, a lot of jobs are Public Service jobs, and a lot of those jobs are taken up by women. This means that for a long time, men would have been the people who were more likely to have benefits and security and pensions, and now that may not be the case. But everybody is kind of worse off in that way.

Looking now at paid and unpaid work, like I said before, women do the lion's share of unpaid work - taking care of the house, taking care of kids, doing community stuff - very important - shuttling kids back and forth, making sure birthday presents are purchased, and all that kind of thing. The interesting news is that if you look only at unpaid work as a primary activity, everybody is doing less of it now. Households are doing less unpaid domestic work overall. Women are doing a little bit less. Men's has increased, but men's contributions haven't increased as much as women's have decreased. We're all doing a little bit less. I haven't seen any explorations of exactly why that is. It could be outsourcing. It could also just be that we have a lot of labour-saving technologies now, and people just aren't doing as much work. That's kind of mixed news.

If you look only at child care, women are the blue bar there, and men are the green. Women are still saying that they do a lot more of child care during an average day than men. Overall, we spend more time now on kids than we used to compared to 1986. People in my generation are spending more time with their children compared to the generation before us.

Finally, I just wanted to show a little bit of preliminary data from my own recent survey. I'm still kind of trying to crunch through the numbers and the gender differences in it. Like I said, I found that women are way more likely to be in unionized jobs; 45 per cent of women versus 32 per cent of men said that they are in unionized jobs. On the other hand, looking just at people who said that they were paid hourly, women are more likely to say that they were paid less than \$15 an hour or exactly \$15 compared to men, who were much more likely to say that they made more than \$15 an hour. If we assume that if you're being paid hourly, it's probably a less secure job; if we're looking at that group of people, women are worse off because they tend to be paid less.

I'm happy to talk to anyone after this meeting about more of that data if anybody has any questions that they would like me to look at. Thank you.

THE CHAIR: Ms. Barbrick.

TRACEY BARBRICK: Coming on the tail end of these women is a bit of a challenge. Women's economic security is top of mind for the Department of Labour and Advanced Education. Just as a recap - our wheelhouse as it connects to all of this discussion is around skills and learning programs, labour services, occupational health and safety, apprenticeship, and higher education. Those are the programs that come from us that knit into this.

That's largely because of all the conversations we'll talk today, but also because our leadership team is seven incredible women that I get the good fortune to work with every day, so this comes with us inherently to the table. Along with my panel colleagues, I'm pleased to have the opportunity to have this discussion today. I think this is a

tremendous opportunity and such a sign of the times that we're here in this room with a panel of women talking about women's issues. That's really exciting.

In 1989, when a man walked into a mechanical engineering class in Montreal and targeted and killed 14 women, it left a permanent mark on the psyche of my generation. I was getting ready to go to university. The École Polytechnique massacre left me and so many others with many questions: How did this happen? Why were women targeted? What does this mean for my future career path?

At a very impressionable age, it opened my eyes to the larger systemic issues facing women. Many of these issues that have existed for a generation still exist today. Some will tell you that we have reached equality, but I think we all know here that's not true yet. You just have to look at the news on a daily basis to see major setbacks on women's issues that we have to be very mindful of.

Here in Nova Scotia, we have to be diligent and we have work to do. We have made steady progress and we are seeing positive trends. To name a few that these women have spoken to before me: women's labour force participation has steadily increased, women have achieved great progress in educational attainment, and women are more likely to have a post-secondary education than their male counterparts right now. The unemployment rate for women is lower than it is for men.

Despite those positive trends, challenges still remain. Women are more likely to have part time and precarious positions: term, temporary, or contract. Women are under-represented in the STEM sector and in leadership and management. Women on average spend more time on unpaid work, and the gap between men and women has narrowed, yet it persists.

Nineteen organizations worked together to release a report and recommendation in 2017 to address sexual violence on university campuses. That report, *Changing the Culture of Acceptance*, outlines in great detail the systemic issues that need to be addressed to make our campuses safer for women.

We have formed a provincial committee and provided annual funding to ensure these recommendations continue to become a reality. That funding has supported a coordinator to advance the work - education modules on things like bystander intervention, the impacts of alcohol, creating social change, among other modules. This work is multi-faceted and needs to continue.

Domestic violence remains part of our society and largely impacts women. Obviously, we need to eradicate that, but until we can, we need to ensure survivors of domestic violence get the time they need to address what they face without the fear of losing their jobs.

Continued employment can help survivors find independence and support themselves and their families. That's why we've recently changed our laws to protect their jobs and give them time off to deal with this horrible reality. Government has also legislated that up to three days of domestic violence leave will be paid by their employer. We understand that survivors of domestic violence can be subject to financial control by their perpetrator, and this provides survivors with some paid time to address the situation without the added stress of explaining a reduction in their paycheck.

No one should have to worry about their job when they're caring for a new child or a very sick family member. We know that women are often the ones that take these leaves, contributing to their economic insecurity, so government has updated parental leave and critical illness caregiving leaves to provide job protection while they're doing these important things.

Government has several programs that support women in pursuing careers in which they are under-represented: Pathways to Shipbuilding, the Women Unlimited program, Graduate to Opportunity, Innovate to Opportunity, the Apprenticeship START Program, and Techsploration - all focus on providing opportunities for women. These prove to be working.

In addition to these programs, most of our 10 universities and the Nova Scotia Community College also offer hundreds of thousands of dollars in scholarships in bursaries to women students. Post-secondary institutions like Mount Saint Vincent University are going to impressive lengths to create pathways for young women into the STEM sectors through programs and mentorship.

The department is also monitoring recent legislative changes being made in other jurisdictions. We're closely watching the pay equity and pay transparency legislation that have come forward by the federal government, Quebec, and Ontario. We are watching the federal bill, Bill C-65, which is focused on reducing workplace harassment through prevention, response, and supporting survivors.

Here's what I know for sure: we can't do this alone. We are only powerful as part of a team and in partnership with others. Government is part of a larger ecosystem, and the challenge now is to work together to eliminate the systemic issues that exist and to close the gap between men and women.

Government cannot advance our work without our diligent, knowledgeable, and leadership partners: Status of Women, our research community, the YWCA, the Centre for Women in Business, Women Unlimited, universities and colleges, employers, employees, and so many others - including our men.

We all have our reasons for working on this. My reason is in the form of my 16-year-old daughter who watches me closely. I want my daughter to live in a world without barriers or fear because of her gender.

Thank you. My colleagues and I look forward to taking your questions and discussion.

THE CHAIR: Thank you, everyone. I think we've had enough information, we will have no questions today. But seriously, we will. I just ask that our witnesses wait until I acknowledge you so that the microphones can be turned on so that Hansard can pick up our sound bites.

We'll start with the PC caucus. Ms. Paon.

ALANA PAON: Thank you very much, Madam Chair, and thank you so much - my mind is full and I'm sure I don't have enough time today to ask all the questions that I would like. However, I did want to start off by discussing something that has not been mentioned in any of the topic matter. It has come out in the media this week, but it's also an issue that my constituency office and I have been dealing with since before Christmas. It's with regard to health care, and particularly health care for women in rural communities.

I think we're all very aware what the challenges are that are going on with our health care system at the moment, especially with primary health care. It's wonderful to know that there are Well Women Clinics in some of the women's centres across Nova Scotia. I know the Strait provides one and all kinds of other very important resources. I am thrilled to the max that we finally have some more resources that have been invested there this year, it's wonderful news.

Going back to health care and health care for women, we're talking about daycare, child care issues, and so forth. It came to my attention before Christmas that the last midwife of three, who are supposed to be available to women who are giving birth in Antigonish - we now have none. All the positions are currently unfilled.

I had a young woman who contacted me just before Christmas who was having her first child and who was given a month's notice that she was going to have to find alternate arrangements. It was a pretty scary situation for her. I'm glad that I was able to help out. However, we're now faced with the fact that we have the last obstetrician-gynecologist who again, of what is supposed to be three in Antigonish, is taking her leave, a female doctor taking her leave in August, and there is no replacement.

Can you imagine, where is this in the conversation? I gave birth to my son in Antigonish, my mother gave birth to me in Antigonish. We have an extraordinary program for training nurses and having wonderful doctors and a long-standing tradition in Antigonish for our natal unit, and we're going to have no one who is going to be able to

care for children, in giving birth to the children that we need so desperately in this province to be born.

I would like to actually ask all of you, anyone who is on this panel, to comment on what you foresee for the future for women to be able to access not only primary care but specialized care, such as this, and women in the most precarious of circumstances giving birth, and you're talking about our future leaders - they are our future leaders - and right now if women are having to go two hours to Sydney from my community, from my constituency, or perhaps all the way to Halifax to give birth, it's absolutely ridiculous.

I would like to know and hear some commentaries from you about how we should be turning this around and why we are in this situation in the first place.

THE CHAIR: This isn't really an HR question but if someone would like to take that.

ALANA PAON: It's a women and economy question, very much so.

[10:45 a.m.]

KAREN FOSTER: I can comment only as this comes up a lot in my work in rural communities. I shouldn't say it's not a unique problem. It's part of a package of problems facing rural communities, where there's a lack of investment and also a lack of creativity about how you get services into rural communities. I suspect that the College of Physicians and Surgeons also has a role to play here in terms of the numbers that they allow. I think it's a really complex problem that needs a lot of people working on it.

I will say that this is the stuff that depopulates rural communities, and you can't have that happen, because looking at this purely from an economic standpoint, there's a lot of really important industry, especially in our province, that is in rural areas. If you can't take care of women who live there, then you're going to have difficulty finding labour. That's a problem that a lot of rural industries are facing. They have viable businesses, but they can't find people to work there. I think you're right to bring it up at a meeting about the economy.

We have a concept in my discipline called social reproduction, which basically says that in order to have an economy, in order to have workers, that you need people to give birth to those workers, then take care of them, and then keep them alive. Also, you need all sorts of care work just to make it so that people who are working age can get to work, stay healthy, be fed, and be happy and fulfilled. That stuff, that social reproduction stuff, is work, and you have to value it as work. Part of that means investing in the services that make it possible for people to do it.

I think it's a really important thing to think of when you're thinking of how to make the economy better. It's not just funnelling money into exciting, new, innovating businesses. It's the old-fashioned basic stuff of how you keep people alive.

ANGELLA MACEWEN: I just want to add to that. I did mention midwifery in my cradle to grave because it's so important. I think governments also need to think about having nurse practitioners and having more midwives. That type of care will help 80 per cent of people. Those midwives will be able to identify the people who need the more specialized care who maybe will have to go into Halifax because that super-specialized care isn't in Antigonish, but the care that most people need, they can get from midwives.

Thinking about investment, again, not like the new innovative shiny thing - this is actually what women have done. It's old, but we're paying women to do it now. We should actually pay them to do it.

STEPHANIE MACINNIS-LANGLEY: I did want to let you know, Ms. Paon, that we have sponsored programs with the Aboriginal community. We have sponsored, with Martha Paynter, two doula programs in Cape Breton, and she's doing another one now. We're looking especially at the Indigenous community. We think there's a possibility to do more across the province. We would also like to see more support for criminalized women, who don't get access to prenatal care in the same way that women who are free do.

That's an ongoing discussion. I would welcome any table that initiates that discussion. If this is not the right table, it would be great to have that conversation in the future with the Department of Health and Wellness.

THE CHAIR: We only have an hour for questions, but I'll give you a quick supplementary.

ALANA PAON: Thank you for your responses. I truly think that this is a conversation that needs to be more mainstream, that we really speak about the connectivity between the birthing cycle and the importance of increasing our rural population, obviously, from the very beginning. We talk about immigration and how important immigration is to this province. I'm a big believer in immigration. I'm a big believer that we're all immigrants here to this province, whether we've been here for 400 years or 2,000 years.

THE CHAIR: Question?

ALANA PAON: I'm going to ask this. I would like to see more work being done within your areas of specialty that take a look at this aspect of unpaid work, this giving birth, this carrying a child, this bringing a child into the world. We're not talking about it enough that it is a women's great gift in unpaid work to this province and to the world. I'd like to have more conversations about that and the importance of actually giving proper

resources and making certain that those resources are available to women in urban and especially in rural Nova Scotia where we're having such a hard time. Thank you.

THE CHAIR: Ms. Zann.

LENORE ZANN: Actually, I'm going to continue on that line of questioning about the unpaid work for women. One of the things we see when we look at the ways that women's economic lives are different from men's is that burden and the effects of unpaid work, and a number of you did mention that.

Here in Nova Scotia we seem to have put an emphasis on home care, which is extremely important and it's an important part of the mix of health care options for older adults, but it can put this disproportionate burden on unpaid family caregivers who are, as you've already mentioned, mostly women.

My question is for Dr. Foster and Ms. MacEwen: Can you talk about how that policy choice can have unintended negative consequences for women, and what policies or programs are needed to mediate that?

ANGELLA MACEWEN: Thank you. Again, I think there are unintended policy consequences both from the perspective of the labour force - the workers providing the care; the family members, as you say, filling in the gaps; and then the people receiving the care. If it's our only solution, then it tends to be a stopgap and that's the problem.

There are certainly cases, as you say, where it's appropriate and that's what's necessary. If you can have someone who is able to come in and provide, say, care in the morning to help somebody get their day started or care to help them get groceries and that's all they need to be able to stay in their home and to stay independent, then that's certainly worthwhile. But if it's because they need a lot more care and there isn't a spot for them that will provide that care, then that's not okay.

From the workforce perspective, what we tend to have is that care is privatized and it's precarious. Women are travelling all over the province; we have home care workers who need a car to drive to the work. They're at home alone with people so they are at risk - as all health care workers are - of violence, of having someone who is resisting care or gets emotionally upset and so their health and safety is at risk, and because they're going out to communities, they don't have co-workers to provide kind of that solidarity in that relationship-building, so it's a very solitary, lonely, difficult job.

We could think about ways to make that job more permanent so that it has higher pay and benefits, so that it's not that precarious, so that you have a stability in that relationship so at least that improves your quality of life and your job. You could also think

about providing more care, instead of an hour here and an hour there, for people where that's clearly a stopgap, expanding services where it's necessary.

I don't know what you can do about filling in the gaps for the family. Unless we provide the full public services that people need, their families, people are either going to fall through the cracks or their families are going to try to fill in the gaps. What you really have to do is think about alternative living arrangements where you can have people living in a community. Maybe they're not in their own house right across the city, they're in an apartment building or in a network of houses together, so co-living arrangements for people who need this type of help where they're still maintaining their independence, but the person providing them care doesn't have to drive all over the city to give them the care they need. I think we need to think more thoughtfully about how we do that - holistically, the whole picture.

STEPHANIE MACINNIS-LANGLEY: I'm really glad you brought up that question because I live with my mother who is 93 with dementia. My husband and I care for my mother, and I will tell you, I have never been prouder of a province. We had home care come in, do an assessment on my mother, and say, you're entitled to have so many hours a week. It's very hard to leave her alone. She's fourth stage dementia.

We feel that she progresses better by staying with us than by placing her. We could easily place her, but her lack of ability to remember who you are will be severely compromised. So by keeping her with us and having the province help us with home care has allowed us - and I have daily contact with the home care worker to make sure she has her needs met, that we've provided for her, that she's supported in her role, that we assist her in whatever she wants to do.

She has recently been taking a dementia course, so she's practising on my mother, which my mother is not compliant so it's quite a challenge for her. She said to me the other day, can I take the dog and your mother for a walk? I said, I don't know who you're going to put the collar on because my mother won't go out. (Laughter)

I think that you would really benefit from having the experience or the knowledge or exploring some of the services that are developing around nursing home care and home care. There's a place out in Bedford that they have people living in pods, so when your memory is failing, your neighbours are all the same - similar to living in apartments.

Also, I would say to you that we look at what's happening in Europe and different cities in Europe. Because this is an issue that I face daily, we look at how we can improve and how I can support and influence other departments and the Department of Health and Wellness in terms of their approach.

I'm really glad you asked that question because my mother was a long-time shopworker and has very little pension and was an enormously wonderful lady and continues to be in this different stage of her life - so a great question.

THE CHAIR: Ms. Zann, a quick supplementary?

LENORE ZANN: I asked Dr. Foster and she didn't get a chance to answer.

KAREN FOSTER: I actually won't say much different, except that I think there's a parallel issue unfolding around people with disabilities. I think if you're looking at tackling home care for seniors, there could be great efficiencies in looking simultaneously at what is happening for people with disabilities.

I know a little bit about this from research, but also from personal connections that with the move away from large institutions, which was very good, there were not enough community solutions. There is just a patchwork of services. There's very little guidance to people whose family members have disabilities about how you get them living in the community in a way that's supported and within the resources that you've been allocated.

These arrangements where we have more of these sorts of small options homes are the future, I think, but you also need to have some coordination among the services that people bring into those homes. It makes a lot more sense to have people working smaller beats and communicating about who needs what. It's not just home care. It's everything - the accounting for those small homes.

Right now, families are left to figure all of that out by themselves - the legality, the accounting, all of it. The same thing would go if you were trying to set up something for a senior, I assume.

I do think more work is needed on the coordinating because I think that probably much of the resources are there and they're certainly being spent in really inefficient ways now.

LENORE ZANN: I just have one more thing.

THE CHAIR: We only have a short period of time; your opening remarks took longer than usual. We have a lot of committee work to do today, and I'd like as many people to get their question times in. Ms. Zann - very quickly.

LENORE ZANN: For a second question, in the 2018 report of the federal Standing Committee on the Status of Women - it was called *Women's Economic Security: Securing the Future of Canada's Economy* - it found that, "Factors contributing to women's economic insecurity are numerous and include systemic and structural barriers in the economy; bias, discrimination and sexism; gender-based harassment and violence; the gender wage gap; a lack of investment in social infrastructure; precarious and part-time employment; insufficient comprehensive support services; and the burden and effects of unpaid work." A number of you mentioned a number of these things.

[11:00 a.m.]

My question for Dr. Foster and Ms. MacEwen is: Can you give us some specific examples of what those systemic and structural barriers for women look like, especially here in Nova Scotia - systemic barriers and structural barriers?

KAREN FOSTER: In my discipline, we have this understanding that most workplace policies are designed with the so-called abstract worker in mind. The abstract worker is male in that the abstract worker doesn't have competing responsibilities from home. I think that's actually the main one.

I guess the problem is that in identifying these barriers, they're not typically so stark that there's a sign on the door that says, we don't hire women, or women get paid less. It's stuff that happens behind the scenes. It's more cultural and social. I would say that one of the ones that's easier to see is just around how employers deal with parental leave, the structure of work hours, that kind of thing. I feel like I'm failing here. (Laughter)

ANGELLA MACEWEN: Before I was an economist, I was actually in the Naval Reserves. There aren't a lot of women in the Navy. I served at the Dockyard here, and I was taking a class. I was doing an exam, and I had to go the bathroom. I had to run down three floors to go to the bathroom because there weren't women's bathrooms on every floor.

THE CHAIR: The Legislature was like that.

ANGELLA MACEWEN: Sometimes the structural and systemic barriers are simply that, like bathrooms. There's nowhere to breastfeed your child. There's not child care for parliamentarians or executives.

There are cultural things where if women speak up or are more assertive, they're taken as rude or aggressive where men are listened to. I don't know if you saw the case where there was a mayor of a small community in Quebec who knitted. She knitted in one colour when men were speaking and another colour when women were speaking. At the end of the meeting, the scarf was 80 per cent men even though the meeting was actually half and half.

What you'll find also is that as one place in the best places in Canada to be a woman, where Halifax fell behind was on leadership. There are fewer women in leadership positions. Men don't notice it because if they're in a room, and it's 30 per cent women, they actually think it's half and half because they're used to being in rooms where there aren't very many women.

I'm in a non-traditional profession. I'm used to being in rooms where there's not that many women. I had a colleague who works in health come into a meeting with me,

and she said, there's no women here. I'm like, what do you mean? It's half. Then you count, and you're like, no, actually, it's not. Those are some of the systemic barriers.

My sister worked in health and safety, and she would go to sites where you would have to walk through the men's washroom to get to the women's change room. That makes it not accessible.

It doesn't have to be outright discrimination or yelling things, but it can be that too. It can be inappropriate sexual jokes. We got that in the Navy a lot. It can be inappropriate racial jokes, slurs, that kind of thing. These are the barriers that make it clear to people that they're not welcome. Even if you don't identify as LGBTQ, but people are using "gay" as a joke - then you know that you're not welcome there, so you often remove yourself from that situation because it's not a comfortable place for you to be.

STEPHANIE MACINNIS-LANGLEY: I just wanted to add that sometimes what happens is, for example, women truck drivers experience problems in getting their hours because the male truck drivers don't want to bring them on the road with them because it's a family issue. There's a trust issue, so the woman can't get the number of hours she needs to be certified in a certain kind of truck, in a certain kind of driving.

It's the same with painters, electricians, any of those fields. It's not a visible barrier, it's just the common knowledge. Also, there are work sites where there's a lot of use of pornography, which is very disturbing to women in those work sites. As my two colleagues have said, it's not necessarily visible barriers; it's the invisible barriers that create that systemic understanding that women don't belong here. Many times women are told they don't belong on those job sites, so that's a challenge when you're trying - we're always promoting women in non-traditional fields, and our bursaries promote women in electrical or women in trades or women in ocean carriers and that kind of work, and you'd know that as well.

THE CHAIR: Thank you. We'll move along to the Liberal caucus. Mr. MacKay.

HUGH MACKAY: Thank you all for your enlightening remarks and so forth. I'd like to come to a topic that is dominating, at times. Some of the conversations across the country around minimum wage and in particular some jurisdictions, as we know, have gone to \$15, but I think the conservative government in Alberta has recently rolled part of that back. Here in Nova Scotia we've not chosen to go to the \$15 wage.

It's easy to think of minimum wage setting the standard for what an economic situation might be, but I believe there's more to the package than just minimum wage when calculating what an individual or a family's economic situation might be. I guess I'm going to address this question to the department, to LAE, if you could comment on this, please.

TRACEY BARBRICK: I'll start, and we'll see if Cynthia needs to pick up where I leave gaps. We're pleased in Nova Scotia that we've recently done a bit of a recalculation of how we formulate minimum wage. It has just gone up to \$11.55, and that's to reflect the fact that we've recognized through Stats Canada that the number of hours that a minimum wage worker is often working is not 40 hours but is 37 hours a week. We've made some adjustments and that will be over the next three years. We'll step that up so it will be about \$1.65 in the difference in minimum wage over that three-year time. That's a positive step, and of course lots of different formulas out there around how to calculate a necessary wage to support a person and their family. All of that is relevant and we need to keep our eye on it over time.

In addition to that, things like income tax changes and the recent \$3,000 increase that allows anyone under \$25,000 in salary an income tax deduction of \$3,000, the pre-Primary program that supports families that have young children has been a great initiative, some transportation, some housing efforts - all those things that wrap around minimum wage, so it's minimum wage, plus the social supports that support a family in that circumstance. I'm not sure, Cynthia, if you would add something to that.

CYNTHIA YAZBEK: I guess I would just add a couple of things. I think we've heard from our fellow colleagues across the table as well as from the questions when we're talking about women's economic security, income level is one piece but there's obviously a whole host of factors we need to consider when we look at that big picture.

When we looked at the minimum wage, there was obviously a very close look at what was happening across the country. There was a lot of discussion around the \$15 minimum wage. We have, as many of you may know, a Minimum Wage Review Committee that in 2018 asked that they have an opportunity to revisit the formula that we were using around minimum wage, partly in light of the changes we were seeing across the country.

That recommendation was accepted in early 2018 and their work continued over the course of that year. That committee was challenged with that difficult question. It's comprised of employee representatives and employer representatives, some folks from the Department of Labour and Advanced Education, economists to help them with the information. Where they landed, as my ADM has suggested, is at that reset around the low-income threshold line of increasing it about \$1.65 over the next three years.

I think it's one important piece of the broader picture. It's always a challenge to look at that question, but it was a question for the committee of balancing the interests of employees and trying to get it to a place that we felt was fair, but also being cognizant that in Nova Scotia, most of our businesses are small and medium, so wanting to ensure we had a good balance there and not unintentionally impact the level of employment that could be offered by employers.

HUGH MACKAY: Respecting your request, I will make it short.

Could you give the committee some indication of the percentage of employees in Nova Scotia that are paid at minimum wage?

CYNTHIA YAZBEK: About 6.6 per cent of employees are at minimum wage. The majority are under the age of 25 and are part-time employees, but the majority of the 6.6 per cent would be women.

THE CHAIR: We'll turn it over to the PC caucus - Ms. Paon.

By the way, the first round took a half an hour. We have a half-hour left for questioning today, so if we could move things along as fast as possible for more questions, I'd appreciate that - and so would some of the members, or all the members.

ALANA PAON: I would like to continue on with a social determinants of health focus, since I started there. We're doing great work, I think, provincially at looking at dispelling the stigmatism around mental health. Nationally, I think we're doing a great job. There's a lot more that we need to do, obviously. There is a lot of stigma still attached to such things.

I would like to know a bit more about what statistics and what studies the province has done or perhaps some of your organizations have done with regard to how mental health - and the mental health of women obviously - directly affects employability and job security within our province. Specifically, if I can just make mention of this, I was absolutely astounded that women had come forward in my own community - eight women and one man - and had taken to court a man who is now in his 90s. Because of the #MeToo movement, they had been encouraged to come forward and follow through with abuse that they had sustained mostly at this person's home.

They went through the process and the gentleman actually pleaded guilty to 10 charges, and because he was 91, he got only three years probation. I was taken aback at how quiet the media conversations have been - I personally think about the inequity and the injustice around that. I also know that those victims, as well as so many others, have sustained ongoing mental health issues - and it will be lifelong - that put them in very precarious positions with regard to being able to sustain employment and get that economic security that they need.

I think we have a big cyclical problem here that needs to be looked at. I'd like to know about the statistics around mental health and women in the workforce, but I'd also like to have a few commentaries with regard to, overall, how we can be doing better to be able to make certain that situations like this - but also moving forward, that mental health services are at the forefront of what we need to be looking at, as well, as far as social determinants of health.

KAREN FOSTER: This is a great question. I don't have statistics at my fingertips on mental health and its impact on employment and employability. I do know we did ask the question on a survey that I just did in March about - are you affected by any of the following conditions. A mental health disorder was one of the top ones. That's among roughly 1,300 people across Atlantic Canada. I don't know the gender breakdown, but it was matched only by mobility problems - problems around. That's a reflection of how old our region is and how old the sample is.

[11:15 a.m.]

I would say it's a significant issue. It's certainly something that needs policy attention. I watched a federal program that had provincial support: Ready, Willing and Able, that helped people with autism and intellectual disabilities get into the workforce. It did it by approaching employers and helping employers get the resources that they need to deal with employees who are facing any kind of barrier. It wasn't about reforming the person and making them more employable. It was about saying to employers, hey, you're going to have this person and they're going to have difficulty with the following tasks; here are the very modest supports that they're going to need.

One of the outcomes of that program was that the average cost to an employer to get people with barriers into the job was \$400 at the beginning of the job. That's it. There are a lot of industries that could benefit from helping people who face employment barriers get employed with very minimal supports.

There's no reason why a similar kind of approach couldn't be taken with all kinds of things beyond autism or intellectual disabilities. If employers are the target, I think there's a lot of promise in that kind of an approach.

ANGELLA MACEWEN: Just very quickly, a lot of people struggle with mental health. It's exacerbated by poverty. If you deal with housing, if you have housing in place, if you have income security, that alleviates mental health as well. To have mental health resources available to people so you're not on a wait-list to see a psychiatrist, so you actually have a therapist that you can talk to that's paid for, that can help prevent the situation from escalating for you.

ALANA PAON: Continuing on the health care aspect, I'm going to make a broad assumption here based on our conversation but ask if this is correct. If there is a lack of access to receive these services in our province, to receive services for mental health, for birthing a child, et cetera, am I correct in making the link that we are exacerbating the situation with regard to women's economic security in this province with a lack of access to primary health care?

KAREN FOSTER: Yes, and you're exacerbating health problems by not addressing fundamental economic problems around how much people make and how secure their jobs are. You could look at it both ways.

THE CHAIR: Ms. Roberts.

LISA ROBERTS: Thanks so much for the very interesting conversation thus far. The report of the federal Standing Committee on the Status of Women recommends that government conduct a gender-based analysis of all programs and policy decisions and conduct gender-response budgeting to ensure that the needs of diverse groups of women, men, and gender-diverse people are reflected in the government's fiscal, social, and economic policies.

The NDP caucus filed a number of freedom of information applications requesting the gender-based analysis conducted by provincial departments on policies, programs, and legislation, but no responsive records were found with the exception of a single page from the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development related to a change made in PowerSchool.

This question might be for Stephanie MacInnis-Langley or Tracey Barbrick or maybe both of you: Can you explain how the provincial government is applying gender-based analyses if there are no documents to back up an assertion that it is being done?

TRACEY BARBRICK: There is a piece right now called the social equity lens that the Executive Council Office has around how Cabinet is intended to be looking at decisions around gender, among other things. The Public Service Commission has undertaken a piece just in the last six to nine months around developing an actual tool that's a gender-based analysis tool. That's in its evolution. I agree with you that we need to be diligent about what that is.

In the meantime, I would say for Labour and Advanced Education, our relationship with the Status of Women over the last few years in the labour services field that Cynthia leads, from domestic violence legislation to eligibility for maternity and parental leave, those conversations are very active and ongoing.

The Status of Women is often our gender lens that you are bringing to us and holding our feet to the fire around those components. Whether it is through the post-secondary piece or our skills and learning programs or our women in trades piece, the number of initiatives happening there, really, the Status of Women has been helping us design what those look like.

The formal tool piece is in development and I think there's probably a little bit of conversation about this over the next few days with the Auditor General chapter that came out today, but there hasn't been an official formal tool. It has been the stakeholder engagement and through the development of these pieces that we're consulting regularly with the Status of Women to make sure we're being mindful there as we need to and continue to. I don't know if Stephanie would like to add something.

STEPHANIE MACINNIS-LANGLEY: We've worked with a lot of departments and earlier on we had done five different projects with Labour and Advanced Education, working with them on using a gender lens in policy development. We also really have encouraged and recommended all of our departments to use the federal tool that is online until we have our own developed. The federal government has a gender-based analysis tool that is free and accessible for any citizen to use and they'll provide a certificate if you take the training. It's a very short amount of training but it's really about any policy that's developed. It's about considering whether it affects human beings; if it affects human beings, then women should be a factor in it.

I think we've been reassured by the Deputy Premier that gender is a consideration in policy development at the larger departments and across government. I know we get called when people are making decisions or when policies are going forward and asked to look at it for special considerations for women, to ensure they haven't missed the gender issue.

Can we do it better? Oh yes. Will we be doing it better? Yes, I think the Public Service Commission is developing their own tool and have taken big steps to do that, so we're looking forward to this progress. Thank you.

LISA ROBERTS: We have tried to get at how that analysis is happening by using FOI applications and one was to the Finance and Treasury Board and again, no responsive documents were found. Maybe if they're using an online tool and then going from that into conversations, there's no paper trail.

I wonder if Dr. Karen Foster or Angella MacEwen would want to comment on where you see either the absence or the strength of that sort of informal analysis, in terms of what is actually rolling out in the province. I think about the conversation we just had around home care and if you put the focus on home care but also the decision to invest or not invest in additional long-term care beds, if you put that through a robust gender-based analysis, what might we be doing differently in terms of where we're investing money or how we're investing money?

ANGELLA MACEWEN: This is a great question for me because this is how I got into this line of work in 2007 with the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives; I wrote about the need for gender budgeting in their alternative provincial budget. I think the Department of Finance and Treasury Board, when they're doing a budget, absolutely has to put everything through a gender lens. You can't just have it sit in the Department of Health and Wellness; you have to have it where the decisions are being made about where the money goes. I think you also have to have really extensive training, you have to have people who are responsible for applying that analysis to taxes, so if we cut taxes for high-income earners, that benefits men more than women because the people who are going to be getting that money in their pocket are men. If we cut public services, the people who both deliver those services and rely on those services are women.

It's very simple and straightforward to see why we need to do it. It's harder to actually have the resources in place to do it. Even Quebec, which is probably the most advanced in Canada at this, doesn't have enough resources, doesn't have enough people who are trained and who are responsible for doing that analysis. It requires a huge culture shift, especially for people in the Department of Finance and Treasury Board because they're looking at more of a short-term bottom line. They tend to say, that's soft, icky stuff that we're not - they'll roll their eyes and stuff like that. But it's actually really important to the bottom line of the health of the province and the health of the finances.

THE CHAIR: We'll move over to Ms. DiCostanzo.

RAFAH DICOSTANZO: Just a quick one that's not related to my question. I know for taxes, we as a provincial government are giving tax reductions to the lowest income, so this is hopefully helping women as well. My question is probably to Ms. MacInnis-Langley. You mentioned the Standing Together grants. I'm really excited about that. I always relate things to how I can help everybody, but specifically the new immigrants and the women immigrants.

I thank you all and I'm delighted whenever I see women at the table and not one man. (Laughter) Especially when it comes to women's issues. I always want to say that I'm so grateful that I'm sitting here because in my country or other countries, this doesn't happen. You are amazing women. We want more and we should want more, but we just have to look back and see how far we've come. Please look at that and thank everybody that got us here and for all the women who pushed to get us here.

In relation to the Standing Together grants, can you give us some examples of the projects? Who is coming to ask for these grants? Is there anything that you may be working with - ISANS - for the new immigrant women? I just would love for every woman who is a new immigrant to have the opportunities I had. We need to educate them. We need to tell them what's available for women. They need a bit more of this education so that they can benefit from what I benefited from and how I raise my girls. If we don't reach the mothers, the daughters are never going to learn that. Let me know what you've done.

STEPHANIE MACINNIS-LANGLEY: We put out over \$900,000 worth of grants as of April 29th. The grants went out for prevention - up to \$10,000 for the Prevention grants. Thirteen organizations received that funding, and 11 organizations received up to \$75,000 in Shift grants.

Some of the projects are addressing domestic violence. What I will tell you in relation to immigrant and migrant women, through our office, we supported for them to apply to the Capacity-Building Fund through Status of Women Canada, so they got a very large amount of money. We don't have that large amount of money, but they got a very large amount of money from Status of Women Canada to build capacity as an organization,

to work with the existing migrant and immigrant women in the community and start to look at what services they need and what would be their best path forward.

We're very excited and I've assigned staffers, and Lesley Poirier in my office has worked with Maria Yax-Fraser and Felicia Egan to put the grant forward. Status of Women Canada has actually given them the money, so we're very excited about that project.

We have quite a few projects focusing on Indigenous women and African Nova Scotian women. We also have developed a partnership with Status of Women Canada, WAGE - Women and Gender Equality - and they are providing us with a cost-matching grant of \$1 million. We each put in \$1 million. That project is for African Nova Scotian women, Indigenous women, and immigrant women. It will be really exciting to see how that project evolves. It's in the review process, but we are assured that we'll be cost sharing with the federal government.

The grants have gone out. We can certainly provide you with a list of grants that have gone out. Many of them are about a collaborative approach. We brought all these organizations together to talk about working together and working intersectionally and working with communities outside the community they live in. It has been very positive.

Twenty-four of the grants are going out. There are two types of grants. One is to provide \$10,000 to people for projects that raise awareness about domestic violence, and the other is the \$75,000 to help organizations explore and develop new and innovative ideas to prevent domestic violence and support victims and their families. We're very excited about those streams.

I think that's a credit to the model the government has supported because this project, this piece of work, Standing Together, is not developed. It's continuously in development. It's an evolving process, which is not usual for a strategy or an action plan. Normally you have a package that you work from, and we haven't done that.

[11:30 a.m.]

These grants going out will teach us what is happening, what is not happening, how we can begin to address the gaps, and how we can begin to address service and service delivery. We know, for example, that African Nova Scotian women do not use traditional services, and neither do Indigenous women. We need to look at how we address those issues, whether it's for economic security or for the prevention of violence. These grants are going to help us find a path forward.

RAFAH DICOSTANZO: These grants or these projects, is there a time limit? How are you going to evaluate them?

STEPHANIE MACINNIS-LANGLEY: It's continuous evaluation. We're working with an evaluation team. We have a professor from Saint Mary's University. She has been

with us from the very beginning of the grants. She has met with all the grant holders. There will be continuous evaluation. The small grants are one year, but the larger grants are up to two years. As we go forward, they will be continuously evaluated to see what the outcomes are.

The other thing that's different here is that we have an intergovernmental table, we have a community table, and we have an international experts table. The way Standing Together developed was as a community initiative. We had a conference at Mount Saint Vincent called Roots and Branches. In that conference, we took the recommendations of the conference and brought it to the Government of Nova Scotia and then got support to move this model forward.

We have that community partnership table, which does include both African Nova Scotian and Indigenous women. We also have the intergovernmental table so that we're working across every government department. Senior leaders are at that table for the government side.

On the third string of that, we have international experts, like for example Myrna Dawson, who runs the Canadian Femicide Observatory. We know that 148 women were murdered in Canada since 2018. We also know that, as a result of domestic violence, 40 women since 1996 have been murdered by their partners in Nova Scotia. We want to make sure that we have expertise that helps us to look at whether what we evaluate is the best path forward for Nova Scotians and their families. We have Dr. Michael Flood from Australia. We have a gentleman from Vermont who looks at family group counselling, Gale Burford. We have an Indigenous scholar, Dawn Lavell-Harvard, who was in charge of the national Native Women's Association. We have Jennifer Llewellyn, who looks at restorative approaches, from Dalhousie.

We're looking at it across sectors so that we can decide, with the help of our partners, what the best path forward is for Nova Scotia. It's really about prevention. Whether you're talking about home care, whether you're talking about mental health, or whether you're talking about poverty, the bottom line here is that we need to have a strategy for prevention at all aspects that will enable women to live full and fair lives.

THE CHAIR: We'll move over to the PC caucus. Mr. Johns.

BRAD JOHNS: I would like to thank everybody. Before I start, I would just like to point out that I counted, and there are eight males and 23 females in the room right now. I am in the minority at the moment.

I find the discussion today to be actually very interesting, especially from Dr. Foster. Maybe I'll register for one of your courses and come take a course, because I do find this quite interesting.

I want to give you some personal background so that you understand where I'm coming from. I think I have had some unique opportunities in my life. I was raised by two very strong women, one my grandmother, who was my best friend, and a mother who was a working mother when the stereotype at the time was a stay-at-home mom. I then had the opportunity in university - I attended Mount Saint Vincent, and it was the first time in my life as a white male in our society that I was a minority of 8 to 1 male to female. It was a great opportunity in life. I learned a lot through that. Then in my mid-30s, I became a single father of two young children, one is three and a half and one is five years old, of which I had 100 per cent for a period of time, and for a majority of the time - they're now 11 and 12 - I had 75 per cent of the time.

I recognize some of the additional responsibilities that traditionally mothers, and especially single moms, have to pick up; doing the laundry - I say I'll never be lonely because I always have laundry. There is no such thing as vacation days because you're taking a vacation day when your kid is sick and if you have two kids, that means that two days later your next kid is sick and then the third or fourth day you really are sick and then you're back in, so I really do understand all that.

I don't think - being a male and dealing with other men - that many men realize the additional responsibilities that are unpaid, that traditionally females pick up, and I certainly do get that.

I don't know if anybody can really answer this for me, but I'm going to direct it towards Ms. Barbrick and perhaps she can help me. One of the things I've noticed, and this year marks my 20th year as a politician - it's funny, but stereotypically politicians used to be the chubby, fat, grey-haired guys, and I got in when I was 30. I've seen a lot of politics and I've always felt that change starts at the top. Political will - Ms. Barbrick brought up in regard to the domestic days - we saw recently two municipal councillors who brought forward and lobbied for maternal leave from council. Those things happen because people are in the positions to lobby and bring them forward.

One of the things I've noticed in my time in politics is how many governments say they want to be inclusive and they want to encourage women in politics, but really there are a lot of barriers in politics at all levels that really restrict women, particularly single women with children, from entering into politics. I find it somewhat ironic that everybody says we want to encourage women in politics, but yet even here at the provincial level, when you look at the hours that the House sits and stuff like that when we're in, my female colleagues who have children, who have spouses, I applaud them. Somebody who is there who is single - I don't know if there is any.

THE CHAIR: There's one man.

BRAD JOHNS: There's one man - well, he's now with somebody. There are just challenges to doing that.

I guess my question really is, what is the government doing, recognizing the barriers that are in place to having women enter into politics, recognizing that the only way to reach true equality is to have women in place who are able to bring forward some of these issues. What is the government doing to encourage women in politics and break down some of these barriers at the political level?

THE CHAIR: Just to let everyone know, one question this round because we're coming close to our cut-off time. Ms. Barbrick.

TRACEY BARBRICK: I can start but you're going to talk about the program that you're currently running for women MLAs, which is fantastic. From the bureaucracy perspective, I believe Laura Lee Langley is the first Deputy to the Premier who has ever been a woman, that there has ever been a woman in that role. She has played a really critical path on creating opportunities for women and identifying that this continues to be a pursuit.

The Civil Service has the privilege of saying we have in senior leader, from director and above positions, 60 per cent women. So the province is doing a good job with its own workforce, I think, and very active mentorship and sort of formal roles around mentorship and things they're calling micro-missions around supporting women to deploy on small projects to get new kinds of experiences that they haven't before.

I have been fully supported through two children and a wife who has a very demanding job, so the Civil Service is doing a great job on that front.

I'm going to ask if Stephanie would offer up some things around the MLA program that you're offering now.

STEPHANIE MACINNIS-LANGLEY: The Status of Women, since 2004, has offered the Campaign School for Women. The Campaign School for Women is not just about running for elected office. It's about helping women understand the opportunities or the challenges of leadership. So you may never run for office, but you may work on a campaign, you may be part of a leadership event in your community, or you may decide to start a business or have more confidence in going out to get a part-time or full-time job.

The Campaign School for Women is over three days. We do it one year in advance of a federal election to allow people to build their campaigns, to build their profiles. We've had some really wonderful experiences with women. This year we had over 100 diverse women. We worked with Diverse Voices for Change, so we had women from all nationalities take part in that school. Many people in this room were in that event at one point or another.

It was a really inspiring event because some of those women are going to put their names on ballots and some of them are going to work on campaigns and some of them have

come back to us and have started their own businesses. It's really about how you support women and how you look at where their challenges are.

We work with women around where their challenges evolve. So if they're having financial challenges around fundraising for their campaign, we talk to them and link them up with people who are experts or who have done campaigns to run for office, or we link them up with the Centre for Women in Business. We have a close partnership with the Centre for Women in Business and we often support small business, women entrepreneurs in going into that stream.

Those are the kinds of things you do to encourage women to be able to make choices that will empower their lives. They have to be in a place where they're ready to take on those challenges. Sometimes it's a longer period of time, so one campaign school may not do it. You may need to have an ongoing relationship. We try to have ongoing relationships with the people who go through our campaign school. It has been very positive.

We're also working with the municipalities. We'll be offering campaign schools in the municipalities this year, which we've not done a lot of before, but we were approached by one of the mayors in one of the communities and she has created a group of women who want that same model provided for women who run municipally. We're quite excited about that. With 27 elected officials being women, and I think 13 of them are mayors in this province, it's really an exciting time.

But no doubt about it, they face barriers. You face barriers, whether it's child care or whether it's the hours anybody is sitting or whether it's the number of events you need to attend. Even if it's starting your own business or working on a campaign, those are always considerations.

THE CHAIR: Ms. Zann - one question. I know you'd love to get more.

LENORE ZANN: No, that's okay. I appreciate everything that you've all said. It's a really important topic and as somebody who is an elected woman, I have to say, in my own riding there was only ever one female elected in the 150 years that we've been there. In my federal riding, there has only been one woman in 150 years. She was only in for four years and then ousted. We look around and we say there are 17 women now, but it's very difficult.

As probably the only woman here who ran for leadership in a leadership campaign, believe me, as soon as you throw your hat in the ring as a woman, the knives are out. It's really difficult. It's almost an attitude of, how dare you? It's difficult to rise above. I'm lucky because I don't have children. I have two little dogs and they don't complain too much when I don't come home at the right time.

I want to talk about child care and the fact that even though I don't have children, I know a lot of other women do, and that Women's Economic Security report that I

mentioned earlier - the 2018 report of the federal Standing Committee on the Status of Women - also recommended, "That the Government of Canada, in collaboration with provinces and territories, ensure that all childcare investments are accompanied by reporting mechanisms and indicators for long-term data collection that will provide all levels of government with appropriate forecasting and analysis tools to improve childcare services, with the goal of achieving high-quality, universal, accessible, flexible, affordable and inclusive childcare."

I would like to know, for instance, is there any data? What, if any, data is being collected in Nova Scotia on child care? Also, how do you feel, as a panel, about introducing universal child care right across the country, as we have in many other countries? I've lived in Sweden, for instance, and they had universal daycare which is so much better for women. So are we collecting data and how do you feel about universal daycare?

[11:45 a.m.]

THE CHAIR: We're now at the time when we we're going to cut off all questions so I'm going to ask you to be very brief. We need to move along, we really do. We have another committee in this room and the clerks need time to prepare for the next committee at 1:00 p.m., so it doesn't give us much time.

Ms. Barbrick, I guess that first question was more your territory.

TRACEY BARBRICK: I actually think that I'd be curious to hear, because child care is not in Labour and Advanced Education, I don't have a lot to offer on that, but I think Stephanie might.

STEPHANIE MACINNIS-LANGLEY: First of all, I have a daughter who is a child care teacher so I know a lot about child care and the pitfalls of child care. Nova Scotia did introduce the universal pre-Primary program for four-year-olds, which is a beginning space. They started in 2017 with an expansion planned but the support comes, as well, from the federal-provincial funding and additional investments have been made in child care centres to increase the availability for spaces for infants because infant child care is very hard for parents to get, and toddlers and after-school care is another area of stress for parents, even with the pre-Primary program.

The investment is going to create 1,000 new, regulated child care spaces and is part of the \$8.9 million investment that Nova Scotia is making through new child care centres and new spaces to existing centres.

Nova Scotia also increased the salaries - thank you very much, Nova Scotia - for childhood educators because my daughter is in that poverty group. Most of these workers are women, and they play a critical function in the development and the care of your

children, nurturing environments for infants and toddlers are really important for parents' stability and ability to stay in the workforce.

Changes were also made to Nova Scotia's child care subsidy program. That means eligible families across the province can receive more funding toward the regular cost of child care, which I think is incremental, but I would really encourage you to bring the people from early childhood education because the program is so exciting and it's opening possibilities.

Have we got the answer to everything? I would absolutely say no but are we trying? I would absolutely say yes. Thank you.

KAREN FOSTER: I can say I don't know of any data that's being collected on quality or outcomes or anything like that or demand. Everything I've seen around any research on gender and work and equality shows that investments in child care help with economic equality.

THE CHAIR: We'll turn it over to the Liberal caucus, Mr. Horne.

BILL HORNE: Thank you. I thought we might have a quiet conversation today but it's not acting like that. I'm pleased to be here to listen to all the comments made and all the possibilities of improvements that could happen.

My question is for LAE mostly but if anybody else would like to talk about the issue. I attended a millwright scaffolding trade school open house and it appeared to me that there were more than 50 per cent females doing the welding and doing the millwright stuff and doing scaffolding. I know you're probably aware of that but I'm just wondering, how far does that stretch into the rest of the NSCC and trade unions? What ability does the province have in assisting that to happen?

TRACEY BARBRICK: Thank you for that question. We didn't discuss it and I think it's something I was sitting here thinking I really need to find a way to highlight what is happening with the Nova Scotia Apprenticeship Agency, women in trades, the STEM sector more broadly, and trades as part of that STEM sector.

We currently have, and I will list them quickly, the programs we have that are actually changing the narrative around women in trades is impressive and a full-court press. Women Unlimited is working with us on the Pathways to Shipbuilding piece where there have been two cohorts of women welders go through the Apprenticeship Agency or through the NSCC's pre-apprenticeship program and are now working with Irving.

A national Women in Trades Symposium has been held three years in a row where they've developed a road map for women in trades which has been a national initiative. Techsploration is a program that is running in 20 schools where young girls, Grade 9 and above, are being exposed to trades and math. The Apprenticeship START program is a

wage subsidy intended to get employers at the table to bring under-represented populations, including women, into non-traditional roles.

A Skills Canada competition is happening this week. There's a whole focus on women in trades. There's a series of competitions that is women in trades that is amazing.

We've just recently got federal funding for three positions in our apprenticeship agency solely focused around women in trades and we have brought 140 new women into the trades in the last couple of years. That's a significant number where you want women to be surrounded by other women when they're tackling an industry that has not traditionally had any men, so that's great stuff.

On top of that we have our Graduate to Opportunity and Innovate to Opportunity programs where we've included a diversity bonus that is to get young women working in non-traditional fields that have graduate degrees and master's degrees, that's showing some really great uptake and interest. We're working with the Centre for Women in Business at the Mount to get local entrepreneurs, where women are getting additional supports to move into entrepreneurship for the things that are holding them back. There's so many great things happening around the STEM sector that are starting to change the numbers. There's so much to do and this is a pipeline discussion, so we need to help the women of today that are in the workforce and we need to grow the women of tomorrow that are going to be part of the pipeline into the future.

We feel really optimistic about what's happening there in the STEM sector, and the university partners at the table and the NSCC - huge scholarships and bursaries right now for women in non-traditional roles.

THE CHAIR: Thank you. We'll conclude with very brief closing remarks, please. We'll start with Ms. MacInnis-Langley. Not everyone has to give closing remarks.

STEPHANIE MACINNIS-LANGLEY: I just want to thank the committee. I think this has been a very exciting morning and it has really been a privilege to come and talk with you. I would really say to you that any time you're doing anything that involves human beings, consider women and how it affects women because when you develop a bike path and it goes through the woods, it's not safe for women. So thank you, thank you.

ANGELLA MACEWEN: Thank you very much. I really enjoyed the discussion. The questions were fantastic. Just a couple of things that I didn't get to say that I want to highlight. In terms of labour laws and minimum wages, what we've seen is the minimum wage isn't the most important piece. It's important but you have to look at what public services are providing in terms of affordability. The Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives has done living wage studies for Newfoundland and B.C., and they've shown where the availability of universal child care actually means you don't have to earn as much

money to live. If you have those quality public services in place, it keeps the need for wages to be increased lower.

If you have that equal pay for part-time and temporary work, then that helps women as well.

In terms of care workers, I forgot to mention that we actually have a lot of temporary workers who come into Nova Scotia and the rest of Canada on temporary work visas and they're tied to their employer, which is actually just a licence for abuse of workers. We need to work on having open work permits. If we're going to have temporary work permits for care workers, they need to be open work permits so they can switch employers, so they are free to be able to do that.

Then in terms of enforcing the labour legislation, we need to have more resources to enforce labour legislation because vulnerable groups, including women, at restaurants - they're more vulnerable to wage theft and have fewer avenues to get a resolution on that, so you need to look at how we can do that enforcement.

KAREN FOSTER: I'll say thank you.

TRACEY BARBRICK: Thank you for the opportunity to be here. I cannot go without the plug that we have a 1-800 anonymous phone line that comes in to Cynthia's team if there are things happening under the Labour Code that need to be reported, tell people to report them.

CYNTHIA YAZBEK: Thank you very much to the committee.

THE CHAIR: Thank you. We'll excuse our witnesses and thank you so much. I know you all had more information for us but we're really on a tight schedule. Thank you very much for coming.

We will take a quick break and then back to the table for business.

[11:55 a.m. The committee recessed.]

[12:01 p.m. The committee reconvened.]

THE CHAIR: Order. We have our agency, board and commission appointments. We have a number of them to go through. We ask for a separate motion for each board. We will start with the Department of Agriculture - Ms. DiCostanzo.

RAFAH DICOSTANZO: For the Weed Control Advisory Committee, I move that the appointments of L. James (Jim) Crooker as member (NSFA) and Angela Gourd as member and secretary (Department of Agriculture) be approved.

THE CHAIR: Is there any discussion? Would all those in favour of the motion please say Aye. Contrary minded, Nay.

The motion is carried.

The Department of Communities, Culture and Heritage - Ms. DiCostanzo.

RAFAH DICOSTANZO: For the Arts Nova Scotia Board, I move that the appointment of Jack Chen as a member be approved.

THE CHAIR: Is there any discussion? Would all those in favour of the motion please say Aye. Contrary minded, Nay.

The motion is carried.

The Department of Community Services - Mr. Horne.

BILL HORNE: For the Cape Breton Island Housing Authority, I move that the appointment of Peter DeWolf as a provincial representative be approved.

THE CHAIR: Is there any discussion? Would all those in favour of the motion please say Aye. Contrary minded, Nay.

The motion is carried.

Mr. Horne.

BILL HORNE: For the Metropolitan Housing Authority, I move that the appointment of Kathryn Toope as a provincial representative be approved.

THE CHAIR: Are there any questions? Would all those in favour of the motion please say Aye. Contrary minded, Nay.

The motion is carried.

Mr. Horne.

BILL HORNE: For the Preston Area Housing Fund Board of Directors, I move that the appointment of Nayo Upshaw as a member be approved.

THE CHAIR: Would all those in favour of the motion please say Aye. Contrary minded, Nay.

The motion is carried.

The Department of Fisheries and Aquaculture - Mr. Horne.

BILL HORNE: For the Nova Scotia Fisheries and Aquaculture Loan Board, I move that the appointments of Richard (Denny) Morrow as Chair and member, and Michael Pothier as a member be approved.

THE CHAIR: Is there any discussion? Would all those in favour of the motion please say Aye. Contrary minded, Nay.

The motion is carried.

The Department of Health and Wellness - Mr. MacKay.

HUGH MACKAY: For the Nova Scotia College of Optometrists, I move that the appointments of Larry Clement and Beverley Patterson as members be approved.

THE CHAIR: Is there any discussion? Would all those in favour of the motion please say Aye. Contrary minded, Nay.

The motion is carried.

The Department of Labour and Advanced Education - Mr. MacKay.

HUGH MACKAY: For the Cape Breton University Board of Governors, I move that the following be approved as members: Denise Allen, William Burke, Donnie Holland, Angela Houston, Keith Maher, Amanda Mombourquette, Harman Singh, and Stephen Wadden.

THE CHAIR: Is there any discussion? Would all those in favour of the motion please say Aye. Contrary minded, Nay.

The motion is carried.

Ms. DiCostanzo.

RAFAH DICOSTANZO: For the Dr. P. Anthony Johnstone Memorial Scholarship Committee, I move that the appointments of Carmelita Cechetto-Shea and Wilfred Dean Smith as members be approved.

THE CHAIR: Is there any discussion? Would all those in favour of the motion please say Aye. Contrary minded, Nay.

The motion is carried.

Ms. DiCostanzo.

RAFAH DICOSTANZO: For the Workers' Compensation Board, I move that the following appointments be approved: Duncan Williams, member, employer representative; Jacquie Bramwell member, worker representative; and Blair Richards member, worker representative.

THE CHAIR: Is there any discussion? Would all those in favour of the motion please say Aye. Contrary minded, Nay.

The motion is carried.

Mr. Horne.

BILL HORNE: Under the Department of Municipal Affairs, for the Nova Scotia Municipal Finance Corporation, I move that the following appointments be approved: Kelliann Dean, Chair and member; Kenzie McNeil, member, AMA; Neil Morley, member at large; Geoff Gatien, member, civil servant; George MacDonald, member, UNSM representative; and Sandra Snow, member, UNSM representative.

THE CHAIR: We have a few people who want to discuss this. Mr. Johns.

BRAD JOHNS: I'm curious to know if the clerk or anybody can - I'm not familiar with why the Chair would actually be the Deputy Minister of Municipal Affairs. I would think that in that role, they would be sitting there as ex officio, not as a voting member and the Chair of the committee.

THE CHAIR: I do know this is a reappointment for her. We will ask the clerk.

JUDY KAVANAGH (Legislative Committee Clerk): I don't have any more information than you do. I'm just looking at the package that we all got last week. Do you want me to look through it? Do you want to have a look?

BRAD JOHNS: If I could, Madam Chair, just for the record, I would like to voice my concern not with Ms. Dean, who I quite like and respect, but the fact that the Deputy Minister of Municipal Affairs is Chair as well as a voting member of that committee. I would think that they would be ex officio. I'm not going to vote against the appointment, but I do want the record to reflect that I am concerned in regard to that.

THE CHAIR: That is noted. Ms. Roberts.

LISA ROBERTS: I'll just note my surprise to see that people are being appointed as UNSM representatives, because the UNSM changed to the Nova Scotia Federation of

Municipalities in the past year. I don't know if there's language that needs to change somewhere in an official way. I expect that those are NSFMR representatives, not UNSM representatives.

THE CHAIR: I think you may be correct there, Ms. Roberts. Thanks for that pickup. I think we can go ahead. We'll just have clarification on that in our next meeting just to know that you are correct in that. I'm quite sure you're right on the ball with that.

Is there any further discussion? Would all those in favour of the motion please say Aye. Contrary minded, Nay.

The motion is carried.

Thank you very much. That wraps up that bit of work. I would like us to turn to our agenda setting. You all have your sheets before you. The Liberal caucus will have three topics, the PC caucus two, and the NDP has given one, and they will be (Interruption) Oh, I'm sorry. I didn't see that. There are three topics forwarded by the NDP.

Mr. Johns.

BRAD JOHNS: I'm sorry. There are three Liberal . . .

THE CHAIR: That we choose.

BRAD JOHNS: One Progressive Conservative that we choose or two?

THE CHAIR: Two Progressive Conservative and one NDP.

Ms. Roberts, did you have a question?

LISA ROBERTS: I would just highlight for the committee that our first choice would be the topic that appears on the first page.

THE CHAIR: Duly noted. Would you like to vote on that now, everyone?

The NDP have put forward the first topic that they have. Would you like to make a motion to that effect, Ms. Roberts?

LISA ROBERTS: I move that the NDP topic for the next round of committee hearings by the Standing Committee on Human Resources be the achievement gap in education, with the witnesses as suggested.

THE CHAIR: Is there discussion? Would all those in favour of the motion please say Aye. Contrary minded, Nay.

The motion is carried.

The Liberal caucus, would someone like to make a motion? Ms. DiCostanzo.

RAFAH DICOSTANZO: I would like to make a motion to accept the first three topics - inclusive education, pre-Primary, and school breakfasts - as our three topics.

THE CHAIR: Is there any discussion? Would all those in favour of the motion please say Aye. Contrary minded, Nay.

The motion is carried.

We'll move over to the topics of the PC caucus, two out of the three. Mr. Johns.

BRAD JOHNS: We would like to put forward the recruiting for continuing care assistants and recruitment strategies within the NSHA, please.

THE CHAIR: Discussion? Mr. MacKay.

HUGH MACKAY: I think the PCs have put forward three excellent proposed topics. I would suggest, with their agreement, that we defer recruitment strategies within the NSHA to the Health Committee, which is perhaps much more appropriate for that particular topic, and give us the opportunity to discuss the other two topics brought forward by the PC caucus.

RAFAH DICOSTANZO: I was going to suggest the same thing, if we can move the first topic to the Health Committee.

THE CHAIR: Okay. Ms. Paon.

ALANA PAON: Madam Chair, I would just like to point out that in the Province of Nova Scotia Rules and Forms of Procedure of the House of Assembly, under the area that speaks on the functions of the Human Resources Committee, which is where we are today, we can consider matters normally assigned to or within the purview of the Departments and Ministers of Education; Culture; and Labour. As we heard earlier today in the discussions, specifically in some of the questions that I had asked, health and access to primary health care is a huge issue, a huge barrier for women achieving economic security in Nova Scotia. It's also a huge issue around labour in general in Nova Scotia. We are here to discuss labour issues. Recruitment efforts within the NSHA, not just for doctors but primary health care officials overall, is a labour issue that is affecting Nova Scotia. I don't understand why we have this cloak of silence continuously around this issue.

Until we actually have a forthright discussion like we had here today with the women who came forward to talk about issues along the lines of women's issues with economic security in this province, we are going to continue to have problems with recruiting primary health care officials in this province. We are going to continue to see the problems that are occurring in Antigonish right now, where women are not only not going to have access to primary health care to give birth in Antigonish, in this province, very shortly, but we're also going to continue to have problems with the fact that most of the health care officials who have left who are under the purview of obstetrics and gynecology and midwifery have stated that they have issues with the way the NSHA has been dealing with them and also around the fact that they are under stress because they are overworked. This is an issue that has far-reaching consequences, and they are labour related.

I would again ask, because they have not been brought forward at the Health Committee level, that they should be brought forward here. Regardless of if they are brought forward at the Health Committee, they should be brought here and spoken about with regard to how they affect labour overall within the province. Thank you.

THE CHAIR: Can I just ask Legislative Counsel - you cited from the Rule Book - do you have any comments?

[12:15 p.m.]

GORDON HEBB: I'm just checking, what's the date on the front cover there?

ALANA PAON: This one here is from 2014 but I don't think that one has changed, or perhaps it has changed slightly. I think the wording of the departments may have changed.

GORDON HEBB: I don't believe it specifically lists departments anymore, but it lists subject matter. It still may be covering what you're saying but I don't believe it mentions departments anymore, it mentions specific subject fields. I was just looking it up here.

THE CHAIR: Okay. While we're waiting, Mr. Johns, a comment?

BRAD JOHNS: I don't know if there was a motion to exclude that particular topic or not. I guess what I'd like to suggest is we saw today how big some of these topics are. We really don't get that in-depth at this committee in some of these topics.

I know our caucus has a couple of questions, given the average that would be three. I'm sure that the NDP caucus have a couple of questions, which would be three - a total of six questions. I think it's an opportunity for them, given what has been happening lately in Cape Breton, but it would give an opportunity for the NSHA or Ms. D'Entremont to highlight what they are doing for recruitment.

I know it was something we brought up last time and I'd like to see it stay on. I don't know if it was a motion to exclude it, but I'd like to have a vote on having that one come forward.

THE CHAIR: The only motion was - Ms. Paon had a motion, and they were just discussions.

BRAD JOHNS: Then I am supportive of the current motion that's on the floor. Thank you.

THE CHAIR: Mr. MacKay.

HUGH MACKAY: It's sometimes rather confusing the messaging that the PC caucus sends out. To refer to our suggestion of referring this topic to the Health Committee as a cloak of silence - in fact, we are sending this to a committee that sits in the Chamber that would be televised, that would be accessible to more Nova Scotians in open dialogue than would occur in the walls of this morbid committee room.

I find it very confusing that the PC caucus is bent on having this topic brought into this room, as opposed to the televised Health Committee in the Chamber. I am definitely going to vote against this because we definitely want these subjects - health care is the number one priority of our government and we want these to have as much visibility as possible, so I will be voting against the motion as it stands.

THE CHAIR: Mr. Hebb.

GORDON HEBB: Just for the record, it now says, "... considering matters relevant to early childhood development, education and labour."

THE CHAIR: Mr. Johns.

BRAD JOHNS: Thank you, Madam Chair. Not to be argumentative, there probably certainly is merit in having it televised but at the same time, given the government's stance and how important health care is to them, I would think the more questions that could be asked and the more transparency, whether it's televised or whether it's here, would be a good thing.

THE CHAIR: Ms. Paon, and then we're going to vote.

ALANA PAON: Madam Chair, I guess I want to say this because it is the second time during this meeting that I've heard Mr. MacKay mention partisan politics. This is an issue that - and we're referring specifically to Conservatives, mostly Conservatives and now, you know, Progressive Conservatives - this is not about partisan politics. When I

come into this room I am representing every single person within the Province of Nova Scotia, no matter what colour shirt they wear, and I wish at times that when we come into this room, knowing full well the immensity of the problem that we are currently facing with regard to recruitment efforts in this province with all kinds of health care positions, whether it be specialty, whether it be nursing, whether it be primary care with doctors, or other health care professionals - it is a labour issue, a labour shortage issue. Recruitment is a labour issue. This has nothing to do with partisan politics. Please let us try to look at this from the perspective of doing what is right for all Nova Scotians. Keep partisan politics out of this room when we are making those decisions. I would ask that everyone in good conscience - I would hope that we always make decisions in the best interest of all Nova Scotians.

I am bringing this topic forward again as we have in the past. If it comes forward in the Health Committee and is discussed there, all well and fine. Whether or not there's a television taking in the proceedings here in this room, it will be in Hansard - everyone will have access to it. I will make certain that everyone in my community and constituency certainly has access to it so that they can see what the responses are.

Televised, non-televised, this has nothing to do with it. For goodness sake, please let us try to get answers to what's not happening or what's going wrong so that we can try to have an open discussion about trying to solve the problems moving forward for every Nova Scotian that is having difficulty with finding the care that they need in our province right now when it comes to health care - please. Thank you.

THE CHAIR: Are you ready for the question? Would all those in favour of the motion please say Aye. Contrary minded, Nay.

The motion is defeated.

Mr. Johns.

BRAD JOHNS: We have to have two, so I move foreign certified professionals finding work, and recruiting of continuing care assistants.

THE CHAIR: Is there any discussion? Mr. Horne.

BILL HORNE: Good topics. We would like to make a motion.

THE CHAIR: There is already a motion on the floor by Mr. Johns to accept the remaining two topics.

BILL HORNE: I would like to recommend that we include officials from the Department of Labour and Advanced Education for the foreign certified professionals finding work in their trained fields. LAE is the regulator of this, and having the DM or a designate would be complementary to this topic.

THE CHAIR: You can make that an amendment to the motion. Mr. Johns.

BRAD JOHNS: I have no objection to that amendment.

THE CHAIR: We will vote on Mr. Horne's amendment. Would all those in favour of the motion please say Aye. Contrary minded, Nay.

The motion is carried.

The original motion by Mr. Johns. Would all those in favour of the motion please say Aye. Contrary minded, Nay.

The motion is carried.

Our next meeting . . .

BILL HORNE: No, we still have the second one.

THE CHAIR: We did both.

BILL HORNE: We have an amendment for the second one.

BRAD JOHNS: I moved the two as one; you amended one.

BILL HORNE: I would like to amend the second one. Also, for the PC topic on recruiting continuing care assistants, we recommend that officials from the Department of Health and Wellness - the DM or designate - also be invited as a witness.

THE CHAIR: Can we agree to that?

It is agreed.

Our next meeting will be Tuesday, June 25th from 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 noon. Our witness will be announced. Our clerk will do her best to schedule our next witnesses. In the summer, do we have witnesses?

JUDY KAVANAGH: No. We will have a witness at the June meeting, if I can bring somebody in. We normally meet for ABCs only in July and August.

THE CHAIR: She will put together a list and she will call the witnesses that we have indicated and schedule someone for June 25th. I'm sure all of us are going to be very busy that week with graduations so we want to get in and out. Well that will be a full meeting, but I know a lot of us will be travelling a lot during the last two weeks of June for

graduations and school-related functions, so there may be substitutes here as well, I would expect.

With that, I adjourn this meeting. See you next month.

[The committee adjourned at 12:25 p.m.]