

**STANDING COMMITTEE**  
**ON**  
**COMMUNITY SERVICES**



**ANNUAL REPORT**

**2012**





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Honourable Gordie Gosse  
Speaker  
House of Assembly  
Province House  
Halifax, Nova Scotia

Dear Mr. Speaker:

On behalf of the Standing Committee on Community Services, I am pleased to submit the Annual Report of the Committee for the period from September 2011 to August 2012 of the Sixty-first General Assembly.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jim Morton". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "J" and "M".

Jim Morton, MLA, Kings North  
Chair  
Standing Committee on Community Services

Halifax, Nova Scotia  
2012



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## **INTRODUCTION**

The Standing Committee on Community Services, an all-party Committee of the House of Assembly, was struck at the beginning of the First Session of the Sixty-first General Assembly. Pursuant to Rule 60(2)(d) of the *Province of Nova Scotia Rules and Forms of Procedures of the House of Assembly*:

(d) the Community Services Committee is established for the purpose of considering matters normally assigned to or within the purview of the Departments and Ministers of Business and Consumer Services and of Municipal Affairs and matters relating to the Human Rights Commission and the Nova Scotia Sport and Recreation Commission.

In 1998, the Speaker, as Chairman of the Legislature's Internal Economy Board, gave the Community Services Committee written permission to also consider matters within the purview of the Department of Health and the Department of Community Services.

## **MEMBERSHIP**

There shall be no more than nine Members of the Legislative Assembly appointed to this committee. The current membership of the Standing Committee on Community Services is as follows:

Mr. Jim Morton, MLA - Chair  
Kings North

Mr. Gary Ramey, MLA – Vice Chair  
Lunenburg West

Mr. Sidney Prest, MLA  
Eastern Shore

Mr. Gary Burrill, MLA  
Colchester-Musquodoboit Valley

Mr. Brian Skabar, MLA  
Cumberland North

Hon. Karen Casey, MLA  
Colchester North

Ms. Kelly Regan, MLA  
Bedford-Birch Cove

Mr. Eddie Orrell, MLA  
Cape Breton North

Mr. Keith Bain, MLA  
Victoria-The Lakes



## **MEMBERSHIP CHANGES**

During the period from September 2011 to August 2012, the committee underwent the following membership changes:

Mr. Geoff MacLellan was replaced by Ms. Kelly Regan.

## **PROCEDURES AND OPERATIONS**

The Community Services Committee traditionally meets once a month. These meetings are usually held on the first Tuesday of the month in the Legislative Committees Offices. During the period from September 2011 to August 2012, the committee met on the following dates:

September 13, 2011  
October 4, 2011  
November 1, 2011  
December 6, 2011  
January 10, 2012  
February 7, 2012  
March 6, 2012  
April 3, 2012  
May 1, 2012  
June 5, 2012

Committee meetings are normally held from 9:00 am to 11:00 am; however, the committee agreed to meet from 1:00 pm to 3:00 pm when the House of Assembly was in session.

## **NOTICES, TRANSCRIPTS, PRESENTATIONS, REQUESTED INFORMATION AND REPORTS**

### **NOTICES**

Notice of committee meetings are sent to all members of the committee, caucus office staff, legislative staff and Communications Nova Scotia. The notices are also posted in Province House and on the Nova Scotia Legislature website at the following address:

<http://nslegislature.ca/index.php/calendar/>

### **TRANSCRIPTS**

Transcripts of all Community Services Committee meetings are available from the Legislative Library in Province House, the Legislative Committees Office, or on the Community Services Committee website at the following address:

[http://nslegislature.ca/index.php/committees/committee\\_hansard/C6/](http://nslegislature.ca/index.php/committees/committee_hansard/C6/)

## **REQUESTED INFORMATION**

On occasions when the committee requests information that is not readily available during a meeting, the witness will be asked to provide the requested information as soon as possible following the meeting. Once the requested information is received and approved by the committee, it is placed on the Community Services Committee website and can be viewed at the following address: [http://nslegislature.ca/index.php/committees/committee\\_hansard/C6/](http://nslegislature.ca/index.php/committees/committee_hansard/C6/)

## **PRESENTATIONS**

Witness presentations are distributed to committee members in advance of the meeting date. Presentations are placed on the Community Services Committee website after the meeting and can be viewed at the following address:  
[http://nslegislature.ca/index.php/committees/committee\\_hansard/C6/](http://nslegislature.ca/index.php/committees/committee_hansard/C6/)

## **REPORTS**

All reports of the Standing Committee on Community Services are compiled by the Legislative Committees Office and forwarded to committee members for consideration. Upon completion of the review and approval of the report, the Chair tables the report with the Speaker of the House of Assembly or with the Clerk of the House of Assembly.

Distribution of the report is as follows, to: the Speaker and the Clerk of the House of Assembly; committee members; all witnesses who appeared before the committee; the Nova Scotia Legislative Library; the caucus offices; and the House of Assembly Press Gallery. This report is available to the general public upon request from the Legislative Committees Office, and is available on the Community Services Committee's website at the following address: [http://nslegislature.ca/index.php/committees/reports/community\\_services](http://nslegislature.ca/index.php/committees/reports/community_services)

## **RESEARCH MATERIAL**

Research material for the Community Services Committee is compiled by the Legislative Library in consultation with the committee clerk and distributed to members by the committee clerk. Reference material is provided to members and caucus staff prior to the meeting date. A copy of this material is also made available to the witnesses appearing before the committee, to the Legislative Library in Province House and to Hansard Reporting Services.

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

The committee wishes to extend its gratitude to all witnesses for their time and co-operation; to Ms. Kim Langille, Committee Clerk, and the staff of the Legislative Committees Office for the coordination of committee meetings; and to Ms. Heather Ludlow, Information

Services Librarian, for the organization of research for committee meetings. Others whose assistance has been invaluable to the committee are: Mr. Robert Kinsman, Editor of Hansard Reporting Services, and staff; Mr. James MacInnes, Coordinator/Director of Legislative Television and Broadcast Services, and staff; and Ms. Margaret Murphy, Legislative Librarian, and staff.

**WITNESSES**

<b>September 13, 2011</b>	<b>Children and Youth in Crisis Taskforce of the Maritime Conference's Church in Action Committee, United Church of Canada</b>
<b>October 4, 2011</b>	<b>Family Service of Eastern Nova Scotia</b>
<b>November 1, 2011</b>	<b>Organizational Meeting</b>
<b>December 6, 2011</b>	<b>Dartmouth Adult Services Centre</b>
<b>January 10, 2012</b>	<b>Alice Housing</b>
<b>February 7, 2012</b>	<b>Feed Nova Scotia</b>
<b>March 6, 2012</b>	<b>Retail Council of Canada</b>
<b>April 3, 2012</b>	<b>Standing Senate Committee on Social Affairs, Science and Technology – Report of the Subcommittee on Cities (December 2009)</b>
<b>May 1, 2012</b>	<b>Coalition of Restorative Justice Agencies</b>
<b>June 5, 2012</b>	<b>Nova Scotia Department of Community Services</b>

**PUBLIC**

**HEARINGS**



**CHILDREN AND YOUTH IN CRISIS TASKFORCE OF THE MARITIME  
CONFERENCE'S CHURCH IN ACTION COMMITTEE, UNITED CHURCH OF  
CANADA** **September 13, 2011**

**WITNESSES**

Ms. Delores Feltmate - Chair  
Dr. Rusty Neal - Member

**MATTERS OF DISCUSSION**

The Children and Youth in Crisis Taskforce was formed to provide a comprehensive review of the current child welfare system based on the most recent scientific consensus regarding current policies. The purpose of the meeting was to discuss issues relating to children in foster care and a potential review of current child welfare legislation.

**MOTIONS**

There were no motions.

**DOCUMENTATION**

There were no requests for documentation.

**TRANSCRIPT**

Full details of this meeting can be found in the transcript which is available online at:  
[http://nslegislature.ca/index.php/committees/committee\\_hansard/C6/cs\\_2011sep13](http://nslegislature.ca/index.php/committees/committee_hansard/C6/cs_2011sep13)





**WITNESSES**

Ms. Nancy MacDonald - Executive Director  
Mr. Frank Capstick - Chair, Board of Directors  
Dr. Charmaine McPherson - Board Member

**MATTERS OF DISCUSSION**

Family Service of Eastern Nova Scotia is a not-for-profit society that provides counselling and programming to support families in eastern Nova Scotia. Their mission is to promote and strengthen families and individuals in the building of a just and supportive society.

**MOTIONS**

There were no motions.

**DOCUMENTATION**

There were no requests for documentation.

**TRANSCRIPT**

Full details of this meeting can be found in the transcript which is available online at:  
[http://nslegislature.ca/index.php/committees/committee\\_hansard/C6/cs\\_2011oct04](http://nslegislature.ca/index.php/committees/committee_hansard/C6/cs_2011oct04)



**ORGANIZATIONAL**

**November 1, 2011**

**WITNESSES**

No witnesses were present at this meeting.

**MATTERS OF DISCUSSION**

The committee met to organize their agenda of potential witnesses and topics for future meetings. Initially, the committee was to hear from representatives from Dalhousie Legal Aid Service, Nova Scotia Department of Community Services and Nova Scotia Legal Aid regarding Employment Support and Income Assistance Regulations; however, the witnesses advised the committee that they did not wish to proceed with their presentation.

**MOTIONS**

There were no motions.

**DOCUMENTATION**

There were no documents requested.

**TRANSCRIPT**

Full details of this meeting can be found in the transcript which is available online at: [http://nslegislature.ca/index.php/committees/committee\\_hansard/C6/cs\\_2011nov1](http://nslegislature.ca/index.php/committees/committee_hansard/C6/cs_2011nov1)



**WITNESSES**

Ms. Cathy Deagle-Gammon - Executive Director  
Ms. Susan Ehler - Chair, Board of Directors

**MATTERS OF DISCUSSION**

The Dartmouth Adult Services Centre is a non-profit vocational day program for adults with an intellectual disability. The purpose of the meeting was to provide an overview of the organization and the services they provide.

**MOTIONS**

There were no motions.

**DOCUMENTATION**

There were no documents requested.

**TRANSCRIPT**

Full details of this meeting can be found in the transcript which is available online at:  
[http://nslegislature.ca/index.php/committees/committee\\_hansard/C6/cs\\_2011dec06](http://nslegislature.ca/index.php/committees/committee_hansard/C6/cs_2011dec06)



**WITNESSES**

**Alice Housing**

Ms. Joanne Bernard - Executive Director

Ms. Catherine Sanderson - Board of Directors

Ms. Michelle Kelly - Board of Directors

**Transition House Association of Nova Scotia**

Ms. Pamela Harrison - Coordinator

**MATTERS OF DISCUSSION**

Alice Housing provides safe second-stage housing and supportive counselling for women and children leaving domestic violence. The purpose of this meeting was to obtain an overview of the programs and services offered by Alice Housing.

**MOTIONS**

The committee received correspondence from the Face of Poverty Consultation who wrote to indicate their support to a suggestion made by Ms. Delores Feltmate of the Children and Youth at Risk Working Group of the Maritime Conference of the United Church during a presentation to the committee in September 2011, to change the definition of a child, as defined in the Children and Family Services Act, from a person under sixteen years of age to a person under nineteen years of age. The committee discussed the correspondence and the following motion was passed:

“That in the context of the present consideration of amendments to the Children and Family Services Act that is going on in the Department of Community Services, that the Minister of Community Services be asked to consider the proposal to define a child as a person under 19 years of age, as opposed to the present regime, 16 years of age, as this proposal had been presented here to the Standing Committee by the Children and Youth in Crisis Working Group of the Maritime Conference of the United Church.”

The Honourable Denise Peterson-Rafuse, Minister of Community Services, provided the following response:

“Thank you for your correspondence of January 18, 2012, with respect to the Standing Committee’s motion that consideration be given to amending the *Children and Family Services Act (CFSA)* to define a child as a person under 19 years of age.

As you know, children in care are a priority for my Department and we are always looking at ways to provide the best possible service to this vulnerable population. We are aware that improvements to existing legislation can always be made, and

that this particular piece of legislation would be no exception. However, the *CFSA* is still strong and provides protection for children.

I can share with you, that we are currently reviewing and planning for our legislative agenda for the coming years, and this *Act* is among those being considered.”

## **DOCUMENTATION**

There were no documents requested.

## **TRANSCRIPT**

Full details of this meeting can be found in the transcript which is available online at: [http://nslegislature.ca/index.php/committees/committee\\_hansard/C6/cs\\_2012jan10](http://nslegislature.ca/index.php/committees/committee_hansard/C6/cs_2012jan10)



**WITNESSES**

Ms. Dianne Swinemar - Executive Director

**MATTERS OF DISCUSSION**

Feed Nova Scotia is a charitable organization that helps feed hungry people by collecting and distributing food to more than 150 member agency food banks and meal programs, while at the same time striving to eliminate chronic hunger and poverty through research, awareness and support programs. The purpose of this meeting was to provide an overview of Feed Nova Scotia.

**MOTIONS**

There were no motions.

**DOCUMENTATION**

The following information was requested and has been received:

- What percentage of clients are under the age of 25?
- Of the 53% of clients in Halifax that are either a single person or a single parent heading up a family, what percentage are women?

**TRANSCRIPT**

Full details of this meeting can be found in the transcript which is available online at: [http://nslegislature.ca/index.php/committees/committee\\_hansard/C6/cs\\_2012feb07](http://nslegislature.ca/index.php/committees/committee_hansard/C6/cs_2012feb07)



**WITNESSES**

Mr. Dave Wilkes - Senior VP, Grocery Division  
Mr. Jim Cormier - Director, Atlantic Canada

**MATTERS OF DISCUSSION**

The Retail Council of Canada is a not-for-profit, industry-funded association that represents more than 43,000 store fronts of all retail formats across Canada, including department, specialty, discount, and independent stores, and online merchants. The purpose of this meeting was to examine issues relating to food availability and pricing in Nova Scotia.

**MOTIONS**

There were no motions.

**DOCUMENTATION**

There were no documents requested.

**TRANSCRIPT**

Full details of this meeting can be found in the transcript which is available online at: [http://nslegislature.ca/index.php/committees/committee\\_hansard/C6/cs\\_2012mar06](http://nslegislature.ca/index.php/committees/committee_hansard/C6/cs_2012mar06)



**THE STANDING SENATE COMMITTEE ON SOCIAL AFFAIRS, SCIENCE  
AND TECHNOLOGY – REPORT OF THE SUBCOMMITTEE ON CITIES  
(DECEMBER 2009)**

**April 3, 2012**

**WITNESSES**

Senator Art Eggleton, P.C. - Deputy Chair

**MATTERS OF DISCUSSION**

In December 2009, the Standing Senate Committee on Social Affairs, Science and Technology - Subcommittee on Cities released a report: *In From the Margins: A Call to Action on Poverty, Housing and Homelessness*. The purpose of this meeting was to obtain an overview of the findings and recommendations contained in this report.

**MOTIONS**

There were no motions.

**DOCUMENTATION**

There were no documents requested.

**TRANSCRIPT**

Full details of this meeting can be found in the transcript which is available online at: [http://nslegislature.ca/index.php/committees/committee\\_hansard/C6/cs\\_2012apr03](http://nslegislature.ca/index.php/committees/committee_hansard/C6/cs_2012apr03)



**RESTORATIVE JUSTICE PROGRAMMING**

**May 1, 2012**

**WITNESSES**

**Coalition of Restorative Justice Agencies**

Mr. Kevin Marlin - Board Member, South Shore Community Justice Society

Ms. Marge DeBodt - Executive Director, Valley Restorative Justice

Ms. Yvonne Atwell - Executive Director, Community Justice Society

Ms. Paula Marshall - Executive Director, Mi'kmaw Legal Support Network

Ms. Grace Campbell - Coordinator of Projects, Mi'kmaw Legal Support Network

Mr. Patrick Wilmot - Mi'kmaw Legal Support Network

**MATTERS OF DISCUSSION**

The Coalition of Restorative Justice Agencies works to advocate and promote awareness of the community justice agencies that deliver the Nova Scotia Restorative Justice Program. The purpose of this meeting was to obtain an overview of restorative justice programming in Nova Scotia.

**MOTIONS**

The committee received correspondence from Ms. Kelly Regan, MLA, requesting that an emergency meeting be held to discuss the closure of Talbot House. Committee members discussed the correspondence and the following motion was passed:

“That we amend our proposed schedule so as to be able to invite the Department of Community Services to address the Talbot House question with us here at our next regular meeting.”

**DOCUMENTATION**

There were no documents requested.

**TRANSCRIPT**

Full details of this meeting can be found in the transcript which is available online at: [http://nslegislature.ca/index.php/committees/committee\\_hansard/C6/cs2012may01](http://nslegislature.ca/index.php/committees/committee_hansard/C6/cs2012may01)





**TALBOT HOUSE CLOSURE**

**June 5, 2012**

**WITNESSES**

**Department of Community Services**

Mr. David Ryan - Associate Deputy Minister

Mr. George Savoury - Executive Director, Family and Community Supports

Ms. Marika Lathem - Director, Family and Youth Services

**MATTERS OF DISCUSSION**

Talbot House is a recovery house located in Frenchvale, Nova Scotia. Recovery houses provide long term, transitional housing for people who require a safe, supportive and healing environment to recover from addictions. Talbot House ceased its operation on March 9, 2012. The purpose of this meeting was to obtain information regarding the closure of Talbot House.

**MOTIONS**

There were no motions.

**DOCUMENTATION**

There were no documents requested.

**TRANSCRIPT**

Full details of this meeting can be found in the transcript which is available online at: [http://nslegislature.ca/index.php/committees/committee\\_hansard/C6/cs2012jun05](http://nslegislature.ca/index.php/committees/committee_hansard/C6/cs2012jun05)



**STATEMENT**

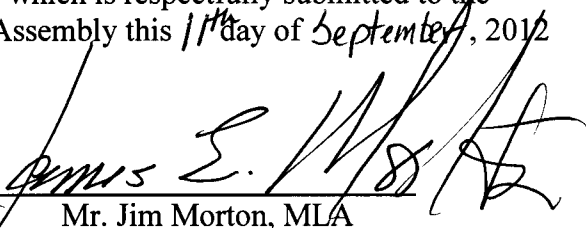
**OF**

**SUBMISSION**



**STATEMENT OF SUBMISSION**

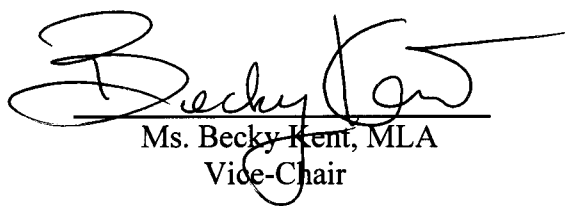
All of which is respectfully submitted to the  
House of Assembly this 11<sup>th</sup> day of September, 2012



Mr. Jim Morton, MLA  
Chair

**I concur**

**I concur**



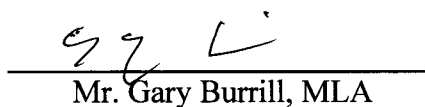
Ms. Becky Kent, MLA  
Vice-Chair

**I concur**



Ms. Michele Raymond, MLA

**I concur**



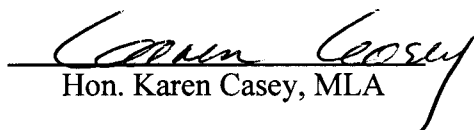
Mr. Gary Burrill, MLA

**I concur**



Mr. Sidney Prest, MLA

**I concur**



Hon. Karen Casey, MLA

**I concur**



Ms. Kelly Regan, MLA

**I concur**



Mr. Eddie Orrell, MLA



Mr. Keith Bain, MLA



# APPENDICES





## **APPENDIX A – MOTIONS**

The following is a list of motions of the Standing Committee on Community Services:

### **Alice Housing – January 10, 2012**

“That in the context of the present consideration of amendments to the Children and Family Services Act that is going on in the Department of Community Services, that the Minister of Community Services be asked to consider the proposal to define a child as a person under 19 years of age, as opposed to the present regime, 16 years of age, as this proposal had been presented here to the Standing Committee by the Children and Youth in Crisis Working Group of the Maritime Conference of the United Church.”

### **Coalition of Restorative Justice Agencies – May 1, 2012**

“That we amend our proposed schedule so as to be able to invite the Department of Community Services to address the Talbot House question with us here at our next regular meeting.”

## **APPENDIX B - DOCUMENTATION**

The following is a list of documents and information requested and received by the Standing Committee on Community Services:

### **Feed Nova Scotia – February 7, 2012**

- The percentage of clients that are under the age of 25.
- Of the 53% of clients in Halifax that are either a single person or a single parent heading up a family, the percentage that are women.



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