



House of Assembly  
*Nova Scotia*

**DEBATES AND PROCEEDINGS**

**Speaker: Honourable Kevin Murphy**

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**Second Session**

**MONDAY, APRIL 27, 2015**

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House of Assembly  
*Nova Scotia*

**HALIFAX, MONDAY, APRIL 27, 2015**

**Sixty-second General Assembly**

**Second Session**

**4:00 P.M.**

**SPEAKER**

Hon. Kevin Murphy

**DEPUTY SPEAKER**

Ms. Margaret Miller

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please. We will begin the daily routine.

**PRESENTING AND READING PETITIONS**

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Hants East.

MS. MARGARET MILLER: Mr. Speaker, I beg leave to table a petition. The operative clause is:

“We, the undersigned, as concerned residents and/or property owners of Mt. Uniacke (NS) #1, request that the Minister of Environment halt the current timetable of April 30<sup>th</sup> - mid May in the decision making process until concerns have been dealt with and instruct Mr. Burn’s office to notify Ms. Miller’s offices of this ‘halt’ and that #2, the Minister’s offices look into and ensure that due diligence is being done pertaining to these concerns not satisfactorily dealt with or explained to date.

# 3, We ask that the Minister instruct his Dept. that no 'decision' be granted on this quarry application until the public Community of Mount Uniacke have had these above concerns satisfactorily explained. Finally, #4, We request and suggest that the best way to convey these answers and explanations to all concerned parties is via a public forum, of which public notice will be given with ample notification."

There are 52 signatures and I have affixed my signature as well.

MR. SPEAKER: The petition is tabled.

### **PRESENTING REPORTS OF COMMITTEES**

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Dartmouth East.

HON. ANDREW YOUNGER: Mr. Speaker, as Vice-Chairman of the Committee on Law Amendments, I am directed to report the committee has met and considered the following bills:

**Bill No. 97 - Quality-improvement Information Protection Act.**

**Bill No. 98 - Chartered Professional Accountants Act.**

and the committee recommends these bills to the favourable consideration of the House, each without amendment.

MR. SPEAKER: Ordered that these bills be referred to the Committee of the Whole House on Bills.

### **TABLING REPORTS, REGULATIONS AND OTHER PAPERS**

### **STATEMENTS BY MINISTERS**

### **GOVERNMENT NOTICES OF MOTION**

### **INTRODUCTION OF BILLS**

**Bill No. 108 - Entitled an Act Respecting Certain Financial Measures. (Hon. Diana Whalen)**

**Bill No. 109 - Entitled an Act to Establish Tourism Nova Scotia. (Hon. Mark Furey)**

MR. SPEAKER: Ordered that these bills be read a second time on a future day.

**NOTICES OF MOTION****STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS**

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Halifax Chebucto.

**KONINGS DAG (04/27/15) - CELEBRATION**

MR. JOACHIM STROINK: Mr. Speaker, as a first generation Canadian of Dutch heritage, I rise in the House proudly wearing orange. This is one of the few days a year where I wear this colour as today is Koningsdag, also known as King's Day. This is a day of celebration in Holland for the monarchy. The celebration started in 1890 after Princess Wilhemina became queen, after the death of her father.

From 1890 until two years ago, it has been known as Queen's Day, but following the abdication of Queen Beatrix, her son, the current monarch, Willem-Alexander, became the first king to serve since the observance of this holiday.

This celebration in Holland is marked by street parades, music performances, and other great acts of entertainment, and Willem-Alexander travels throughout Holland to take part in these various celebrations. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Argyle-Barrington.

**HOWE, JOSEPH - MANTRA**

HON. CHRISTOPHER D'ENTREMONT: Mr. Speaker, in the past few weeks in this sitting I've had the occasion to reflect on the words of a man we pay homage to often in this Legislature: ". . . when I sit down in solitude to the labours of my profession, the only questions I ask myself are, What is right? What is just? What is for the public good?" Many recognize these words of Mr. Joseph Howe, a stalwart champion of the rights of freedoms of the press.

The government seems intent upon setting House hours to rush flawed legislation through, including scheduling back-to-back bill briefings that conflict with the Law Amendments Committee. This disorganized scheduling is limiting media's ability to do their jobs properly. It is unfortunate that due to the incompetence of this government, one of the most important freedoms is being undermined - and that is of informing the public on the progress of this people's House.

We should therefore be guided by Mr. Howe's mantra and ask ourselves daily: what is right, what is just, and what is for the public good?

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Halifax Needham.



**MCNEIL GOV'T. - BUDGET: NDP - DISSENTING VOTE**

HON. MAUREEN MACDONALD: Mr. Speaker, the NDP caucus voted no to the McNeil Government's budget that targets our young people and puts jobs at risk. The government slashed and subsequently capped the Film Tax Credit without any plan to grow the industry and create new jobs; the government's elimination of jobs across the province, including the closure of visitor information centres and cuts to provincial parks staff; and the government is opening the door to rapid tuition increases by lifting the tuition cap.

The McNeil Government is putting health care at risk, making life less affordable for students and has no plan to create jobs and grow the economy. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Chester-St. Margaret's.

**MCNEIL GOV'T. - BUDGET: NDP - DISSENTING VOTE**

HON. DENISE PETERSON-RAFUSE: Mr. Speaker, last week, all members of the Opposition voted against the McNeil Government's budget. We voted against cutting funding to the AIDS Coalition of Cape Breton and against the elimination of Film and Creative Industries Nova Scotia. We voted against the McNeil Government's disastrous cuts to eating disorder programming in Nova Scotia and against the free-for-all tuition increases next year. We voted against freezing income assistance rates for the second year in a row and against the abundance of cuts affecting services in rural Nova Scotia.

Unfortunately, the McNeil Government used their majority government to pass the budget, with every single one of their MLAs voting in favour of these cuts. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Hants East.

**HANTS EAST MLA - HUSBAND: SUPPORT - THANK**

MS. MARGARET MILLER: Mr. Speaker, I just want to have a very short message today. Today is my husband's birthday. It made me reflect on all of us standing here in this House. As we all stand here, none of us stand alone. We all have people back home who are here with us in spirit. They support us, they listen to our rants when we come home, and listen to our discussions and all too many political conversations that they want no part of.

So today, I want to thank my husband for the support that he has been and thank all of our families, because not one of us would be here without the support that we have at home. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Argyle-Barrington.

**GOREHAM, KAREN: COMMUN. SERV. - THANK**

HON. CHRISTOPHER D'ENTREMONT: Mr. Speaker, I would like to congratulate Karen Goreham on being honoured at the 41<sup>st</sup> annual Provincial Volunteer Awards on April 7<sup>th</sup>. The Town of Clark's Harbour nominated Ms. Goreham as Provincial Volunteer of the Year for her outstanding dedication to her community. For over 10 years, Karen has been a treasurer of the Oakville Cemetery Club. She fundraises for Port Clyde area churches and the local fire department. She is a devoted member of the Roselin Nickerson Care Fund and the New Horizons Senior Club. Karen is an active member of her church and has been a member of the Rebekah Lodge for over 20 years. She volunteers much of her time to deliver Meals on Wheels throughout Cape Sable Island. I do thank Karen for her many years of community service.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Sackville-Cobequid.

**MCNEIL GOV'T.: PATIENT CARE - FOCUS**

HON. DAVID WILSON: Mr. Speaker, the NDP voted no to the McNeil Government's budget that placed important health care services at risk. The government froze the health care budget and cut front-line patient care. The government cut grants for organizations that provided valuable health care and support services to vulnerable Nova Scotians and their families. The government provided no new additional long-term care beds and a \$3.6 million cut to the long-term care facilities budget.

The McNeil Government needs to focus on what really matters in health care, and that's patient care.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Chester-St. Margaret's

**PREM.: WORKERS - RESPECT**

HON. DENISE PETERSON-RAFUSE: Mr. Speaker, it's a shame that the Premier hasn't learned that you can't just take away workers' rights. Bill No. 1 and Bill No. 37 showed us a side of the Premier that Nova Scotians hadn't seen before. He told health care workers to take the deal, hinting that if they didn't, he would make sure the next one was much worse for them.

Now the Premier has set his sights on our province's well-known post-secondary institutions and the people who work there. Not the presidents, of course, who appear to be the only ones the Premier consults on issues related to universities. I'm talking about the people who clear snow on campus so students can get to class, the clerks who make sure that our young academics are registered for their courses, and the instructors who work long hours answering questions and marking papers.

Why hasn't the Premier learned that workers in this province deserve to be treated with respect?

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Kings North.

### **TETLOW, GILLIAN - ATHLETIC ACHIEVEMENTS**

MR. JOHN LOHR: Mr. Speaker, I wish to express my congratulations to Gillian Tetlow of Port Williams, who was named Mount Allison's Female Athlete of the Year. Ms. Tetlow is a third-year biology and environmental science double major. She was a CCAA All-Canadian and ACAA Player of the Year, and plays both soccer and badminton at Mount Allison - a very deserving honour. Ms. Tetlow's commitment, hard work, and determination is impressive and indeed an inspiration.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Halifax Needham.

### **PREM.: BILL NOS. 1, 30, 37 - LESSONS**

HON. MAUREEN MACDONALD: Mr. Speaker, for a Premier who claims to want fewer executives and administrators in the province, he certainly has gotten cozy with university administrators. Not only did the McNeil Government pass a budget last week that allows administrators to increase tuition by as much as they would like next year and the following year. They are now eliminating any sense of security the employees and faculty had through their collective agreements. What message is the Premier sending to students in our province and to workers in our province? Has he not learned anything at all from the unconstitutional debacle of Bill Nos. 1, 30, and 37?

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Sydney River-Mira-Louisbourg.

### **SAKALAUSKAS, HERBIE: BOSTON MARATHON - CONGRATS.**

HON. ALFIE MACLEOD: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate Herbie Sakalauskas from Sydney River, who qualified to run in the Boston Marathon on April 20<sup>th</sup>. Herbie is a 34-year-old and he ran over 1,000 kilometres during his 14 weeks of training. Herbie is married to Denise and they have two sons - Liam, 6, and Lucas, 4. Herbie works at CBU as a graphic video production technician. I know Herbie well and it is truly my pleasure to congratulate him on breaking the three-hour mark and finishing in the top 10 of the 90 Nova Scotians who ran in the Boston Marathon.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Sackville-Cobequid.

**EATING DISORDERS CLINIC: BUDGET REDUCTION - REVIEW**

HON. DAVID WILSON: Mr. Speaker, the McNeil Government reduction in services at the Eating Disorder Clinic in Halifax needs to be reviewed. A memo obtained from the IWK Health Centre indicates that the Eating Disorders Specific Care Clinic will operate two days per week; previously it was open three days a week. The IWK eating disorder team has been cut; a psychologist with over 20 years of experience has retired and has not been replaced. One in six young women will develop an eating disorder by the age of 20. Eating disorders have the highest mortality rate of any mental illness. The McNeil Government needs to focus on patient care; their budget doesn't.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Sydney River-Mira-Louisbourg.

**MACISAAC, ANGUS - C.B. CERT. OF BRAVERY/GOLD PIN**

HON. ALFIE MACLEOD: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Angus MacIsaac, who was recently honoured by Mayor Cecil Clarke and the Cape Breton Regional Municipality with the Certificate of Bravery and a gold pin for saving three women in a house fire in the Town of New Waterford 40 years ago. In the early hours of January 21, 1975, when Mr. MacIsaac was a New Waterford police officer, he rescued the women from a burning apartment on Plummer Avenue. Mr. MacIsaac did not hesitate to put his life at risk to rescue the women, without thought for his own safety. It is my privilege to honour Angus MacIsaac today in the House of Assembly.

MR. SPEAKER: Barring more member statements we'll move on to Government Business.

**GOVERNMENT BUSINESS**

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Government House Leader.

HON. MICHEL SAMSON: Mr. Speaker, would you please call the order of business, Government Motions.

**GOVERNMENT MOTIONS**

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Government House Leader.

HON. MICHEL SAMSON: Mr. Speaker, I move that you do now leave the Chair and the House resolve itself into a Committee of the Whole House on Bills.

[4:18 p.m. The House resolved into a CWH on Bills with Deputy Speaker Ms. Margaret Miller in the Chair.]

[4:27 p.m. CWH on Bills rose and the House reconvened. Mr. Speaker, Hon. Kevin Murphy, resumed the Chair.]

MR. SPEAKER: The Chairman of the Committee of the Whole House on Bills reports:

THE CLERK: That the committee has met and considered the following bills:

**Bill No. 82 - Change of Name Act and Vital Statistics Act.**

**Bill No. 88 - Dental Act.**

**Bill No. 90 - Tobacco Access Act.**

without amendments, and

**Bill No. 87 - Audiologists and Speech-Language Pathologists Act.**

which was reported with certain amendments by the Committee on Law Amendments to the Committee of the Whole, without further amendments, and the chairman has been instructed to recommend these bills to the favourable consideration of the House.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Government House Leader.

HON. MICHEL SAMSON: Mr. Speaker, would you please call the order of business, Private and Local Bills for Second Reading.

**PRIVATE AND LOCAL BILLS FOR SECOND READING**

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Government House Leader.

HON. MICHEL SAMSON: Mr. Speaker, would you please call Bill No. 104.

**Bill No. 104 - Milford Haven Fire Protection Commissioners Act.**

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Government House Leader.

HON. MICHEL SAMSON: Mr. Speaker, on behalf of my honourable colleague, the member for Guysborough-Eastern Shore-Tracadie, I now move that Bill No. 104 be read a second time.

MR. SPEAKER: The motion is for second reading of Bill No. 104. Would all those in favour of the motion please say Aye. Contrary minded, Nay.

The motion is carried.

Ordered that this bill be referred to the Committee on Private and Local Bills.

The honourable Government House Leader.

HON. MICHEL SAMSON: Mr. Speaker, would you please call Bill No. 106.

**Bill No. 106 - Colchester Regional Development Agency Act.**

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Minister of Education and Early Childhood Development.

HON. KAREN CASEY: Mr. Speaker, for the information of the members here, Bill No. 106, the Act to Wind Up the Colchester Regional Development Agency, is necessary in order for funds which are being held by that agency, to be released to the appropriate municipalities: the Town of Stewiacke, the Town of Truro, and the County of Colchester.

With the dissolution of the RDAs, this money is being held there by the agency and cannot be accessed, so this bill is necessary in order to allow that to happen. I move second reading of Bill No. 106.

MR. SPEAKER: The motion is for second reading of Bill No.106. Would all those in favour of the motion please say Aye. Contrary minded, Nay.

The motion is carried.

Ordered that this bill be referred to the Committee on Private and Local Bills.

The honourable Government House Leader.

HON. MICHEL SAMSON: Mr. Speaker, would you please call the order of business, Public Bills for Second Reading.

**PUBLIC BILLS FOR SECOND READING**

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Government House Leader.

HON. MICHEL SAMSON: Mr. Speaker, would you please call Bill No. 101.

**Bill No. 101 - Private Career Colleges Regulation Act.**

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Minister of Labour and Advanced Education.

HON. KELLY REGAN: Mr. Speaker, I move that Bill No. 101 be read a second time.

I'm sure everyone in this House would agree that all forms of post-secondary education are important to making sure young people get the skills and training they need for good jobs. We're well known for our top-notch post-secondary institutions in Nova Scotia including 10 universities, 13 Nova Scotia Community College campuses, and more than 45 private career colleges.

Private career colleges provide students with a wide variety of training options that link them to good jobs right here at home. Nova Scotia's private career colleges offer 250 programs to more than 4,000 students each year, training them for a variety of careers including information technologists, plumbers, cosmetologists, firefighters, continuing care assistants, and carpenters. We value these institutions and the contributions they make to the economy. That's why it is important to ensure our legislation is current and the programs they offer meet job market demand.

Changes to the Private Career Colleges Regulation Act will improve program quality, hold colleges more accountable, and speed up administrative processes. As part of the amendments we'll remove the annual registration requirement and that's to reduce unnecessary paperwork; we will also streamline the approval of programs already sanctioned by a regulatory or professional body; we'll be able to exempt certain programs like those with very low fees or short completion times; and, as minister, I'll have the authority to exempt groups of occupations like fitness instructors.

Mr. Speaker, these amendments will require regular program approvals every five years. Performance standards will also be phased in to ensure colleges are accountable to students for their investment, which could include considerations like employment rates after graduation. For those changes to have teeth they will require enforcement. These amendments include tools like compliance orders and administrative sanctions to deal with minor violations of the Act.

A few days ago I tabled legislation that requires more accountability and cost control at Nova Scotia's universities; private career colleges should be held accountable too. The department plans to change the regulations to require colleges to provide audited financial statements. Regulation changes will also further define performance standards and exemptions for certain programs and groups of occupations. We'll consult with college administrators and operators before those steps are taken.

These changes are not expected to take effect until this time next year; this will give institutions time to understand the new requirements and make necessary adjustments. These amendments are about making sure students are getting a quality education that will help them land good jobs after graduation. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Northside-Westmount.

MR. EDDIE ORRELL: Mr. Speaker, it's a pleasure to rise to speak to Bill No.101, the Private Career Colleges Regulation Act. There are about 45 private career colleges in the Province of Nova Scotia that, as the minister said, offer 250 programs to over 4,000 students. They offer an important service to Nova Scotians, providing courses on skills needed to move our economy forward, and this is a step in the right direction as it reduces the burden of these institutions to fill out unnecessary paperwork that increases administration costs that end up being passed on to our students.

Mr. Speaker, hopefully this will identify some of the new courses that are necessary or some of the areas where we can add to producing more students and more people in the workplace. It will also phase in performance standards to ensure that colleges are accountable to students for their investments.

Oversight and accountability in these programs is important; the spirit of the bill seems to recognize this. We understand that in the creation of the bill, private colleges throughout the province were consulted and they were to provide feedback where they were facing difficulties. We hope these discussions will continue to determine how government can enable these institutions to best assist to teach students in this province. We expect the department will work with these private institutions to best promote programs that will lead to real employment and real employment opportunities for graduates.

Overall, the legislation reduces red tape while increasing accountability to students. This is the spirit that the PC caucus supports. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Sackville-Cobequid.

HON. DAVID WILSON: Mr. Speaker, I am glad to rise for just a few moments to talk on Bill No. 101. Definitely in our province, we have a number of private colleges that educate thousands of Nova Scotia students. I think it's important that as we move on and try to modernize our legislation, that we do it in a manner that has a positive effect to the courses and to the education that our young people especially have in front of them.

We have to remind ourselves that many - I don't want to say older students, but the more mature students use these private colleges to upgrade their education; I hope the government recognizes that. I understand the need to ensure that the courses provided are geared towards the marketplace and the employment opportunity here in our province, but try to remind ourselves that it's not just in our province; there are opportunities globally. As we move forward, I think consultation is the key: ensuring that there's an open dialogue between these private colleges, between the students who are looking for educational options in our province, and that we continue and the government continues to have that opportunity there.



We look forward to this piece of legislation going to Law Amendments Committee, where we may hear from those who are directly affected by this change in legislation, and we look forward to that process, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: If I recognize the minister it will be to close the debate.

The honourable Minister of Labour and Advanced Education.

HON. KELLY REGAN: Mr. Speaker, I move second reading of Bill No. 101.

MR. SPEAKER: The motion is for second reading of Bill No. 101. Would all those in favour of the motion please say Aye. Contrary minded, Nay.

The motion is carried.

Ordered that this bill be referred to the Committee on Law Amendments.

The honourable Government House Leader.

HON. MICHEL SAMSON: Mr. Speaker, would you please call Bill No. 105.

**Bill No. 105 - Education Act.**

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Minister of Education and Early Childhood Development.

HON. KAREN CASEY: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to speak to Bill No. 105, an Act to Amend Chapter 1 of the Acts of 1995-96, the Education Act.

On Friday, I tabled amendments to the Education Act that made a clear path for a new provincial code of conduct. The bill allows for action items in Nova Scotia's Action Plan for Education and it follows what we heard from Nova Scotians. It will provide a plan that will shape the future of education in the province for the next five years.

We developed the comprehensive plan based on the feedback from those Nova Scotians and we are committed to renew, refocus, and rebuild the education system. Currently each school board and, in many cases, individual schools create their own code of conduct. This has led to inconsistencies of implementation across the province.

Through the feedback from the minister's panel, we heard Nova Scotians tell us that bullying remains an issue inside and outside schools; teachers need more support to address classroom behaviours that are disruptive to the learning and are sometimes unsafe. Consequences are not always appropriate for the severity of the incidents, such as violence

towards teachers and/or other students and/or other adults in the building. The learning climate depends on staff and is very different from one school to the next.

To address these concerns, the action plan dedicated Pillar Three to looking at an inclusive school environment, and it identified the need for a ministerial policy on the code of conduct. That code of conduct will provide clear and concise standards for behaviour; programs of prevention and intervention to support and promote positive student behaviour; standards of acceptable and unacceptable behaviours in our Nova Scotia schools; and the roles and responsibilities of our partners in education. It will identify consequences for unacceptable behaviour; procedures for reporting, recording, and tracking incidents of unacceptable behaviour; and the requirements for monitoring incidents of unacceptable behaviour, both at the school board level and at the provincial level.

The new school code of conduct will apply to all schools in all school boards effective September 2015. It will help strengthen the schools' ability to respond effectively to those behaviours, including bullying, cyberbullying, violence, and all forms of harassment. In order to move forward, changes were required in the Education Act to align with the new code, and the proposed changes in the Act will give more clearly-defined standards for behaviour, replace regional and school codes of conduct with one provincial code, and increase the time that a principal may suspend a student without board approval from five to 10 days. Schools and school boards will provide support for student learning in the event of an out-of-school suspension.

In the bill briefing on Friday, some questions were raised about the increased days for suspensions by principals. We looked across the country and we found that there is a wide range, from five days to 30 days, and that Nova Scotia is still on the lower end of that scale. This does not mean that principals will use this as their first option. The code outlines a number of options for addressing student behaviour, and they are progressive in nature. This is so that we are addressing the root cause of behaviour and we are not looking only to be punitive. We need to focus on prevention and intervention. However, the 10 days does give principals and teachers another way to help address violence, bullying, and the issues that compromise the safety of the school, interfering with teaching and learning.

Once the amendments to the Education Act are passed, the department will move forward with providing professional development to principals and school members, and the department is also developing a webinar for teachers. Schools will inform parents of the changes by sending a copy of the code of conduct home with every student. In developing the new code we held focus groups with teachers, school boards, superintendents, school board chairs, and parents through their school advisory councils. I want to acknowledge their contribution and feedback and thank them for their dedication and time. I also want to thank Nova Scotians who took the time to highlight these important issues through the education consultations.

Mr. Speaker, as I conclude, I move that this bill be read a second time.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Pictou Centre.

HON. PAT DUNN: Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to have the opportunity to speak on the Act to Amend Chapter 1 of the Acts of 1995-96, the Education Act.

I think I should start off by saying this is welcome information with regard to the school code of conduct in our schools across the province. Inappropriate behaviour consumes too much instructional time in our schools, and I think this is definitely a step in the right direction to curb a lot of this inappropriate behaviour. Often, of course, this inappropriate behaviour leads to power struggles and the inconsistency with regard to instructional time that is wasted throughout the school day.

Occasionally minor disruptions quietly escalate into what we would call classroom battles - a little power control between students or perhaps between instructors and students. This can erode the relationships and respect that we want to see in the school environment. Inappropriate behaviour has been a problem for schools for far too long, and this code of conduct certainly is a step in the right direction.

One of the first things we need to understand is why and how students misbehave. There are highly predictable categories that help us understand why some schools have students that misbehave. They include the need for attention, power, control, confidence, and the need for belonging. It's critical that teachers get to know their students, understand their students, and the impact of their home life. This is all part of the school code of conduct. The school code of conduct, of course, is the guidelines that they have to help them manipulate through the days and weeks in the school system.

All humans want to feel like they have some influence and control in their lives. This is no different with students. One of the main reasons why students misbehave in school, in my opinion, is because they feel they cannot succeed in school. They feel like they cannot succeed in school, so they start misbehaving. I would like to revert to another area that I think will play an important part in the school conduct - many students over the last number years misbehave because they felt like they couldn't achieve. I think with the appropriate measures the minister has been involved in with regard to extra attention given to an intervention into early childhood development, into the early grades with the P to 3, with the math and literacy, and grades after that, I think eventually a lot of these students that we have experienced over the years misbehaved because they had great difficulty achieving in those areas.

With that extra attention and the extra funding and so on into these areas, I think, eventually will help also curb that particular reason for students misbehaving because for far too long we have seen so many who have reached the junior and senior high levels and not able to achieve because they have missed so many concepts up through the years.

Some students, of course, need to be connected; there are all kinds of reasons why they misbehave. In this particular code of conduct, there are numerous prevention strategies that will be available. I am sure that professional development days will be available also for teachers and administrators to bring themselves up to speed with regard to the use of the code of conduct, and as the minister mentioned it will be very important for everyone to be on board, on the same page: parents, students, support staff, administrators, and teachers.

The other thing too, students today study and work in a world dominated by technology and that brings to light another area where this code of conduct becomes very, very important. Of course, schools are trying to show students the need to learn to use it safely and effectively, ethically, and respectfully - the technology that is used in our schools.

This legislation is positive, it is good legislation. I'm very happy to see it. It's something that has been needed for a long time because we need some consistency. For too long schools had interpretations of conduct different from other schools. Departments, school boards, and schools across the province were not always on the same page so with one code of conduct, province wide, I think this is going to very positive.

I'm going to finish with a few words and say that this is legislation that we will be supporting. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Truro-Bible Hill-Millbrook-Salmon River.

MS. LENORE ZANN: Mr. Speaker, it does give me pleasure to rise today to speak to Bill No. 105, an Act to Amend Chapter 1 of the Acts of 1995-1996, the Education Act. We do support this bill and I, in particular, like to see the unacceptable behavior including the bullying, which means, in Subsection 3(1) of Chapter 1:

“... ‘bullying’ means behaviour, typically repeated, that is intended to cause or should be known to cause, whether directly or indirectly, fear, intimidation, humiliation, exclusion, distress or other harm to another persons [sic] body, feelings, self-esteem, reputation or property, and includes assisting or encouraging such behaviour in any way;”

I also approve of (b) which adds immediately after clause (c), the following clause:

“... ‘cyberbullying’ means any electronic communication through the use of technology including, without limiting the generality of the foregoing, computers, other electronic devices, social networks, text messaging, instant messaging, websites and electronic mail, typically repeated or with continuing effect, that is intended to cause or ought to reasonably be

expected to cause fear, intimidation, humiliation, distress or other damage or harm to another persons [sic] health, emotional well-being, self-esteem or reputation, and includes assisting or encouraging such communication in any way;”

I think by simplifying this and including bullying, cyberbullying, discriminatory behaviour, illegal activity, insubordination, misuse of network or online resources, physical violence, racist behaviour, repeated use of tobacco or electronic cigarettes, sexual assault, sexual harassment, sexual misconduct, significant disruption to school operations, use or possession of alcohol, drug-related paraphernalia, illegal drugs, or weapons, vandalism, and verbal abuse - it actually makes a lot of sense to me.

As the former colleague mentioned, a lot of kids today do want to try and fit in. They want to belong. Sometimes they will act out in ways that are harmful to themselves or others purely because they want to try and belong or stand out or get some kind of attention. I think teachers are at their wit's end trying to control some of this bad behaviour. We need to be able to make it a little easier for them to be able to bring the hammer of the law down within the system.

I also want to flag as well that I think it's so important that our teachers again be consulted with on all of these different changes to any kind of Education Act. How can education reform really be truly valid if teachers' opinions and teachers' research have not been included? The Nova Scotia Teachers Union and the Canadian Teachers' Federation have been researching educational issues and collecting data on various educational topics for years using a variety of means. We would really like to see the department wanting to collaborate with these professionals who are working with students on a daily basis and who have seen the effects of various government policies on our students on a daily basis and in our classrooms over the years.

If educational reform is not just a smoke-and-mirror attempt to make education more viable for students and teachers, then I think the government really needs to include active teachers and their voices in any decisions that they make. Teachers need to be included on education committees. I think that their voices and experience and professionalism are valid. It's not valid to rely just only on retired teachers or outsiders to give their viewpoints. Even student opinion will have a different vantage point to the teacher viewpoint, and parent viewpoints will be different from a teacher's. The views of teachers on forming new codes of conduct policy and reforming AESOP, streamlining curriculum outcomes, and updating forms on TIENET like IPPs, adaptations, behaviour plans - all this work needs to include teachers' voices and the experience of the Nova Scotia Teachers Union.

The Department of Education and Early Childhood Development should want to build teacher morale and act as a bridge between teachers and the public, and not demoralize teachers by talking about just fixing the system that they've been trying to glue

together for years because of slash-and-cut policies over the years. We need to see education and teachers as a real asset to our province because it's the compassion and the creativity and the caring of teachers who will actually help our youth grow into citizens who will make our province grow and prosper. With that, Mr. Speaker, I take my place.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Pictou East.

MR. TIM HOUSTON: Mr. Speaker, it's a pleasure to rise this afternoon and say a few words on this important bill. This is an issue for me. I've had a relationship with a situation across the province where it's high school kids and pretty strong disagreements between them. It got to the point where one child got a restraining order against the other child, but they both stayed in the same school. The net impact of that was the student who was bullied - and was bullied in the eyes of the courts, which issued a restraining order - stopped going to school. Just stopped going to school, couldn't face the other person and it caused a lot of emotional damage for both families and for all the students involved.

I only raised that example because I wonder in the code of conduct, as it is developed, if there could be a mechanism where the schools - it wouldn't always be possible in some rural communities, there may not be two schools - but in situations where there are schools within a certain geographic area, maybe in a case like that the student could be moved to another school to respect the restraining order and to give everyone peace of mind. So that's something I will be looking to see if that can be incorporated into the code of conduct in situations where it gives the board or the principal or somebody the power to acknowledge what the courts have decided.

I wondered - and I don't know the answer to this - I was interested in the fact that the new code of conduct would allow principals to suspend a student for a maximum of ten days instead of the five from before. On the face of it that sounds like a really good thing and I'm sure that's going to be necessary in certain student behavioural situations, be necessary for the benefit of everyone. But it was raised to me in discussion - the question was asked: Would that be used? I was thinking back, when I was hearing that person ask those questions, to some interactions I've had with friends who are police officers. Over the years they would hear about incidents at different schools and they would go to check it out and say no, there was no incident or it was dealt with already, or something like that.

I was thinking in the context of does it suit the administration, does it help the administration in any way - I don't know the answer - to have fewer suspensions, fewer disciplinary actions on record? Does it give the perception that the school runs smoothly? I don't know the answer, but I did want to raise that as a question and as a consideration for the department - how schools are evaluated, how schools are assessed. In that assessment process is there demerits or merits for fewer or more disciplinary actions?

I do echo my colleague from Pictou Centre's support of the bill. I think the bill is a good thing, but there are other considerations that I think might be useful in this case. I was

looking at the recording and tracking of incidents of unacceptable behaviour - where does that go and how does that get used by the department or the board or whatever the case may be?

Two things to think about, both coming down on the side of more discipline in the case of keeping students separated as the courts have thought should be, and the other one in the case of making sure that principals are free to use, in this case the suspension of ten days, without a negative reflection back on their school and their situation. They're just two concerns or questions I felt compelled to stand and raise today.

So I leave the minister with those couple of comments and with my assurance that I support this bill as it is.

MR. SPEAKER: If I recognize the minister it will be to close the debate.

The honourable Minister of Education and Early Childhood Development.

HON. KAREN CASEY: Mr. Speaker, thank you to the colleagues across the way for their comments.

I do want to make sure that people don't see this as bringing down the hammer of the law - that is exactly the opposite of the intent of this particular legislation. I do appreciate the comments from the member for Pictou East and Pictou Centre. I believe the experience in the classroom as an administrator and also the experience that the member for Pictou East has had with respect to students who have had some difference of opinion and it may not be beneficial for them both to be in the same building are certainly good issues to raise.

The intent of having the extension from five to 10 days is to allow those people who know the students best, that being the teachers, the support staff, and the principal, to try to resolve the issues and provide the appropriate suspension if necessary, but definitely the appropriate supports within the school environment rather than take it to a committee of an elected board that perhaps don't know the circumstances as well. So that's the intent of extending it to 10.

Again, I would repeat, Mr. Speaker, that this is intended to look at the root cause and address and try to change unacceptable behaviour rather than be punitive, but it's also intended to make sure that the classroom environment is positive, safe, conducive to learning, and conducive to teaching.

With those few comments I thank the members for Pictou East, Pictou Centre, and I do want to close the debate on second reading of Bill No. 105.

MR. SPEAKER: The motion is for second reading of Bill No. 105. Would all those in favour of the motion please say Aye. Contrary minded, Nay.

The motion is carried.

Ordered that this bill be referred to the Committee on Law Amendments.

The honourable Deputy Government House Leader.

MR. TERRY FARRELL: Mr. Speaker, would you please call Bill No. 103.

**Bill No. 103 - Municipal Government Act.**

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Minister of Municipal Affairs.

HON. MARK FUREY: Mr. Speaker, I move second reading of Bill No. 103, the Municipal Government Act. The legislation before the Legislature repeals some provisions of the municipal government which authorize electors to apply to the Nova Scotia Utility and Review Board for incorporation as a town. It also repeals some provisions of the Act which authorize the URB to order the continuation of a dissolved town as a village - in other words, it prevents towns from becoming villages or villages from becoming towns.

This change will give us the foundation for strong and viable government structures and promote regional thinking. Over the past year, Mr. Speaker, I've met individually with all municipal councils and we've had an open and frank dialogue. The topic of structural change has been part of these discussions. I've also been clear in saying that we will not force any municipality to dissolve or amalgamate, but we will support those leaders and those municipal units that initiate structural change that results in efficiencies and long-term viability for their citizens.

However, Mr. Speaker, with aging infrastructure, a declining tax base, increased costs for essential services such as fire, police, and transportation, and an aging and declining population, many of our towns are struggling and facing financial challenges. The oneNovaScotia report, the Towns Task Force, and the Provincial Municipal Fiscal Review, all highlight the need for reform of municipal government and regional service structures to achieve efficiencies.

Today's amendments will help ensure a positive future, a long-term viability for municipalities in Nova Scotia. Mr. Speaker, we need to look beyond our backyards, recognize current trends and realities for the sustainability of our municipalities. This change does not dissolve any existing town or villages, it will help provide municipalities with more efficiencies and more stability, as well as promote regional co-operation.

With that, Mr. Speaker, I look forward to the comments of my colleagues.



MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Pictou West.

MS. KARLA MACFARLANE: I'm honoured to stand in my place today to speak to Bill No. 103. We all know that strong, viable municipal units are something that we all want. As well, we are all aware that the recent release of the Financial Condition Index shows us that many municipal units are struggling, and we're all concerned about the long-term viability of some of these municipalities and feel that possibly they are in jeopardy.

We've all had the opportunity to read the Ivany report and learn that it recommended a municipal reform process, in fact Goal 18 of the Ivany report requires that the province take the opportunity to review the municipal government structures that are in place, and this is something that I agree with and I think that most people would agree with and see the necessity of having this done soon, actually.

In my view, I think for surrounding municipalities, a lot of problems and misunderstandings arise because they don't see government, all of us here actually, having a plan forward for them and they often think that they are solo and there is no one to support them in government, going forward. We know that Nova Scotia has, I believe, 24 villages and I don't think they were consulted on the town task force. I know that in March the minister sent out a press release saying that he would not force amalgamation or dissolution on villages. He said as well, the department would work with municipalities and villages on sustainable solutions and not force them to dissolve or amalgamate. I can only speak for myself, I don't know about all other municipalities in Nova Scotia, but I do know that the minister has closely worked with the Municipality of Pictou County and they are grateful for his time and conversations.

I think, going forward, this could possibly be a good piece of legislation. If the Ivany goals were enshrined, however, in legislation, we would all know when the plan would be complete and we would know what the government's end goal is for municipalities. I think that's a little bit unclear right now but despite bills from both, I believe, from our Party as well as the NDP, the government has chosen not to take the important step to see those bills come to fruition.

I do recognize - I think it's a good opportunity to recognize that there are some concerns from the area of New Minas and Chester with regard to this. I can't speak for them; I'm not in that area, nor did I have an opportunity to speak with anyone from that area. I know that New Minas spent a fair amount of money on studying and evaluating and I think back in the 1990s Chester spent actually over \$100,000 in studying the process of becoming a town. I just hope the minister will take an opportunity, perhaps he already has, to reach out to New Minas as well as Chester. I, Mr. Speaker, and the caucus support this bill going forward to the Committee on Law Amendments and we certainly are eager and anxious to hear from presenters.

There is no doubt that we all want very strong, viable municipal units within our province and I am sure the minister intends to see this happen. Thank you very much.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Chester-St. Margaret's.

HON. DENISE PETERSON-RAFUSE: Mr. Speaker, this subject is dear to my heart, coming from Chester and living in Chester Village all my life. I have to respectfully disagree with the minister and the government in terms of the lack of consultation with the residents of Chester and New Minas and I believe through the village commissions throughout the province.

What I really believe this piece of legislation comes down to, which I find very disturbing, is the rights - and I'll say that again - the rights of residents to choose in terms of whether they want to live in a village or town. That's what I find so disturbing about this legislation because when people have the right to voice their opinions, and when people have the right to come together and make a decision of where they want to live and what type of residence they want to live in whether it's a town or a village, they get the right to make that choice and they should have that right to do that.

That's what we call a democracy and what is bothering me here is the fact that if you look at governments in the world or a country which has total power over the people who live there or it's a small group making that decision, that's what they reference as a dictatorship. A dictatorship is a kind of rule in which it doesn't matter what the people want or need and I have to contend that I'm very worried that this is the way we are going here in the province in terms of the number of bills to date that the McNeil Government has brought forward that took people's rights away. We're looking at Bill No. 1 and Bill No. 37 that took rights away from health care workers. We're now presenting Bill No. 100 that will take the rights away from faculty members and workers in universities. The ones who have all power will be the presidents of those universities.

This is what I am trying to encourage the minister to consider, that once again, this is going to have an effect on rural Nova Scotia. I do realize that there have been a lot of financial issues within the municipalities, but what I would suggest is that the type of legislation that should actually be brought in is to have an auditing process of the municipalities and look at the municipalities in terms of if they are considering working with neighbouring municipalities in terms of sharing resources and sharing costs.

There are some municipalities that I am aware of in the province that have taken great effort to do this. Other municipalities have made the decision that no, they don't want to do that. There are some municipalities that if you look at even their staff complement, the ratio out-balances even a city. Those are the types of things that the minister should be bringing legislation in - and to look at the fiscal responsibilities of municipalities, and are the dollars being spent appropriately. Where are they being spent? Are they willing to come

together with another municipality and work together? There's some that I do know that do that, then there are others that don't.

I was involved a number of years ago when the Village of Chester - there was a group of residents who were interested in Chester becoming a town. I can say that it was an issue where there were good arguments on both sides of whether it should turn from a village to a town. It was quite a process. I believe that process is in place within the legislation we have here today, because both sides had to prove their points and do a lot of statistical research. It would have been nice if that had been done for our film and television industry. This is what they were required to do if they wanted to become a town: they had to present the evidence and show it on a financial basis of whether or not that village could be sustainable as a town.

I believe there were about three independent studies done around the Village of Chester showing that the tax base would enable the village to become a town with the level of tax base that we have there. I do know that from the municipality's point of view there's some concern if that tax base is taken away, the other communities surrounding the municipality as part of the municipality may have more of a struggle because their tax base is lower.

I think that given legislation that requires that type of study to be done and be presented to the URB is exactly what exists today. So we do have accountability around that. I believe, Mr. Speaker, that it is so important that people feel that they do have the right to make that decision, and that if one-third of the population decides they want to move forward with changing their village into a town, they are able to go forward with that. But then they have to present all that evidence around it, or the URB, who we respect in their decision-making abilities, will not support that decision.

I'm not standing here and saying whether or not a village should become a town. I'm standing here and saying that it should be those people who pay the tax base and live in those communities who have the right to the decision. I do not see where government has the right to come in and tell Nova Scotians whether or not they should be living in a village or town.

When you look at the fact that this very government has been trying to say that the rights in other areas we're seeing have been taken away, but yet the government is saying that they are not going to interfere with business. What they're going to do, Mr. Speaker - it's up to business and corporations to become viable and create employment in our province.

Yet on the other hand, the hard-working folks in our communities are being told, well, you cannot become a town if you have that desire to become a town. It's not something that happens in a minute. It's not a quick turnaround. It is a lot of organized work by the village commission and it's a lot of organized work by the community

members. I believe it should be up to the community to make that decision. It's unfair. It takes rights away.

The other thing that I find was not truly appropriate was the fact that these villages were quite concerned about a year ago when they heard rumours that the McNeil Government was moving in this direction, that based on the report there was a recommendation to dissolve villages. In turn, the minister did make a public announcement to tell the villages no, we're not going to dissolve villages.

However, on the flipside, the sentence wasn't completed. If the sentence was completed and said, well, we're not going to dissolve villages, but we are going to take your rights away to become a town, I think there would be a different piece of legislation presented here today, because I believe the minister and government would have heard from many community members throughout all Nova Scotia in areas where they want to have the rights to make their own decision who would have come forth.

Also, oddly enough, there was consultation with the Union of Nova Scotia Municipalities, but it fell short of great consultation with the village commissions. The reason for that is because the government knew the Union of Nova Scotia Municipalities was more for having some type of legislation that prevented the villages becoming a town, because once again, they are concerned about their municipal units.

Unfortunately, there was a lot less of a discussion with the village commissions because of the fact that they knew that if they had a heads-up on this, there would be a great deal more protest in the community and within the media. That was a sure-fire way to make sure that they kept the people at bay about this particular decision, because they only found out about it last week when the legislation was brought forward.

That is not transparency. That is not consultation. I wish that the government would stop using that language, because the only way you can use language is if you take actions to your words. You don't just say words; it's all in the actions. We're seeing a great number of Nova Scotians, whether they are from the health care sector or whether they are from the film and television industry or whether they are university students, whether they are faculty, whether somebody simply lives in a village or somebody lives in a town - their rights are being stripped away by this government.

That is not what we call democracy. When you look in the dictionary, it is certainly not defined as that, because people need to have a voice. They need to have the right to be able to pursue what they believe in. I think it's very unfortunate that the government is bringing forward legislation that takes rights away.

I believe the legislation in place today could actually be improved in terms of more accountability around becoming a town or a village - if that's the concern - and that more financial research and data would be provided, not just on the side of the village and how

it can sustain itself as a town, but there also needs to be data and independent study on how the rest of the communities within that municipality could be sustainable.

If they both match up and it proves they both can be sustainable, then what is the problem allowing a village to become a town, if the evidence is there? I think the legislation should be protecting the rights of people, and not actually taking that right away. I think this is another example of taking the right away, and I would encourage the minister that this legislation doesn't come forth in the manner that it is, that there is an opportunity or an option there that if the evidence is presented, then that village or town can pursue whether they want to switch to a village or switch to a town.

I think it's all in the fact that if you have the financial independence reports and the door is open that the public wants to take - it's not easy for a community to come together and to have the ability to have that kind of research done. If they do that and they support it financially themselves, as took place before - it did not come out of the budget from the municipality; it was self-supporting - I think if all those efforts are brought together in a community, which is challenging to do, then there is a great will to go forward with whatever that change would be.

I think that it is simply about looking at municipalities in a more accountable way of what they're doing. That's where some of the issues could be in the viability of our municipalities - not just the fact that a village may want to become a town. I think that's where we need some work to be done in our province.

In closing, I would like to say that I am - I think that many Nova Scotians are - concerned by the fact that we need to live in a society where we feel we have the right to pursue what we believe in, and if we have a consensus around that, or we have 50 or 60 per cent, then that's what it's all about, being a democracy. Our legislation needs to be written in the format of a democracy, not in a format of a dictatorship that we know best and that's what we're going to tell the people of Nova Scotia - how to live, where to live, what to do, whether you want to live in a village or a town.

I would recommend to the minister that there be more discussion on this legislation and that there be more work on it and more consultation before it goes through with the village commissions in our province. Unfortunately, that has not been the case, and once again, we're finding that rights are being taken away, not given. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Kings North.

MR. JOHN LOHR: Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure to also stand and say a few words about Bill No. 103. The whole issue of municipal governance and what is happening in the province really has been dictated by the economy of rural Nova Scotia being in decline. We've seen a number of towns that have had significant industries pulled out of those towns over time, and they're no longer viable as a town. We've seen some villages - these

towns have had to struggle with this. This whole issue is going to be a huge issue going forward for this government.

On the other hand, there are villages like New Minas, which are quite prosperous villages - well, New Minas in particular. I'm not sure if there are any others. It has been known for about a year that New Minas was considering becoming a town. In fact, they were into the study that has been mentioned. They've spent about \$20,000 on a study, and it's about halfway through, nowhere near complete.

It's hard for the Village of New Minas not to feel that this legislation has been directly sent to them - a message to New Minas to stop, cease, and desist. I think the Town of Hantsport might feel the same way. I'm not as certain that they were going toward being a village. It was one option on the table, I do know that. It might well be that the Town of Hantsport feels that way too. I have a question for the minister, why wasn't this a moratorium and not a cease order? Possibly that would have been a better choice for this moment in time.

The real question is, what are the next page and the next page which aren't in this bill - what really is the plan for our towns and villages? This bill sort of stops everything at this moment, yet at the same time it doesn't answer those questions. I would suggest that the real question is, what is the process? How are we going to get to some future point in time when we have viable communities? Whatever that ends up looking like, we need to know now what the process is. I think that that's what's missing in this bill. This bill is just a moment in time. It just stops the process at this moment and stops processes that were underway. I would suggest a moratorium might have been more appropriate than a cease and desist.

Certainly, the study that's underway in New Minas - there are lots of reasons why that study should be completed, and not simply because they are halfway into that, but just simply because all of these issues are going to have to be studied to a great extent. We need to know the answers. Our communities need to have viable structures that are efficient and allow rural Nova Scotia to go forward in a prosperous manner and allow the taxes that come in to be used in efficient manners too. This bill is sort of presuming an outcome without going through the process. I think that we need to go through the process. The discussion has to be made.

There has been much said about the fact that the UNSM and the Towns Task Force report recommended a dissolution of villages. The minister said in March that that would not happen. It feels a little like teaching a young person to drive a standard. You put it in gear, take a jump ahead, and stop, and then we're putting it in gear again and taking another jump ahead, but we're stopping really.

Rather than a process that's sort of going forward in fits and starts, I would suggest to the minister that the process needs to be laid out and explained in an orderly fashion. In

all fairness, maybe that is the next bill. Maybe that's Bill No. 105 or Bill No. 106. Maybe the minister has that in mind. If that is already in mind, I would suggest that the process is the most important thing at the moment, that the villages do not feel left out, that the towns do not feel left out, that the municipalities do not feel left out, but that there is sort of a framework that allows this whole discussion to go forward and that the right things happen in the right areas for the right reasons so that we can all continue living in our rural areas and prospering there.

Clearly, not everything can be controlled in Halifax. We need to have municipal governments. I would suggest to you, I believe, that there will still be some role for villages. I know that my own village of Canning recently solved a parking dispute where I don't know if someone further up the ladder could've solved that dispute. Clearly, it's also about the dollars and cents. I don't know where that will all shake out, but I think that the minister needs to lay out a process that all of these government units - the municipalities, the towns, and the villages - can take a look at and say yes, that makes sense, without judging where it will end up - that the process that we go through makes sense and that each participant in that process has an opportunity to explain what they want and their hopes and needs and what they see for their communities so that we go forward.

At the end of the day, we need much more efficient municipal government - there's no doubt about that - and government that makes sense for each region. I think those goals of efficiency need to be put into that process. But I think that just to have a moment in time where - oh! Stop!

I sympathize with the Village of New Minas. They feel this was directed right at them. I would suggest to you that a moratorium would have been a better choice, but what this bill needed to be about was a more detailed explanation of what the process is and how we are going to work through these decisions in the future. With those words, I take my seat. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Guysborough-Eastern Shore-Tracadie.

MR. LLOYD HINES: Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to rise to speak to this bill. First of all, I have a deep appreciation for the role of civic government in Nova Scotia, as I know all members of the House do. There's quite a history here of people who began their service provincially by first learning the ropes and the pleasures of public service at the civic level.

The municipal makeup of Nova Scotia dates back to 1879, when the current template was set out. We have over 400 elected councillors, mayors, wardens, and village commissioners in the province. In my previous role as Warden of the Municipality of the District of Guysborough, we went through the process that led to the dissolution of the Town of Canso - which on dissolution was 104 years old, I believe - and witnessed the difficulties associated with the decision that led to that circumstance. However, almost

three years out, I think it's safe to say that the folks of Canso, though apprehensive at the time coming in, have seen some of the benefits of the dissolution.

Currently we have the Town of Mulgrave, one of Nova Scotia's most beautiful seaside communities, which was the second-last town incorporation in Nova Scotia, incorporated in 1923 - the most recent one was Bedford in 1980 - who are coming to the realization or wrestling with the issue about how they justify sustaining their role as a town in the present environment, with a population in the vicinity of 900 people.

Mr. Speaker, I think that for me, municipalities embody the Hans Christian Andersen story of "The Ugly Duckling." As we all know, that has to do with self-realization. The ugly duckling had difficulties early on, but when it realized it was really a swan, it opened up a lot of opportunities.

I think that's the lesson for municipalities in Nova Scotia. They have great responsibility, they provide a great service, they have very wise authority that has been delegated to them in the Municipal Government Act and in the towns Act associated with land use planning, which is a fundamental piece of work for municipalities and which takes into consideration the wishes of the local community. They also do have the somewhat onerous power of expropriation, which of course hinges on the concept of the public good, and are able to use that authority in the interest of the public good, which sometimes overshadows the individual interest. I think the concept of the public good is the underpinning of the very democracy that we are all so fortunate to participate in in our province and in our country.

I would also say that I am very pleased at this government's approach in terms of collaboration with the municipalities. The issue of the financial indicators index has been a straightforward laying-out of the process and facing the realities, and has helped struggling civic corporations come to grips in a sensible, somewhat clinical way, bereft of some of the emotion that associates itself with some of these decisions that struggling town communities are faced with.

The concept that this bill incorporates makes it very clear that the towns are capped at the levels that they are, and that there won't be any default to villages from a town dissolution - a process that has been evaluated many times, in particular the dissolution of the Town of Canso. Probably that decision was held up for five years - five difficult years for the citizens of that community, evaluating the merits of dissolving into a village. I see no restriction or harm to towns and villages in this process. I think it makes it very clear what government's position is and I'm very happy to support that legislation.

MR. SPEAKER: If I recognize the minister it will be to close the debate.

The honourable Minister of Municipal Affairs.



HON. MARK FUREY: I certainly appreciate the comments of my colleagues. I will take a few moments to respond to some of the points. With some of those points I appreciate the support that colleagues have extended and with some of those comments, Mr. Speaker, to respectfully disagree with some of the comments my colleagues have advanced.

My colleague from Pictou West spoke specifically, Mr. Speaker, about the recommendation 18 in the Ivany report and it does talk about municipal government and regional service structures, inherently villages, and the need to restructure and find a new way forward for governance.

The objective there is to find efficiencies, eliminate the inefficiencies and to also find a playing field where we are working together, collaboratively, to advance the objects of each of us individually in those communities, but collectively to advance a much stronger model that regional government is able to move forward on in the best interest of those communities, and it doesn't matter which sector we are talking about.

I talked to municipalities and I'm talking now to corporations who are looking to invest in rural Nova Scotia, and they are talking about governance models and the challenges that they face as a business entity in dealing with multiple levels of government, and their objective, to reach out and work with those regional government models that facilitate open dialogue, consistent discussions, and the challenges that local governments face when we have competing interests whether it be at the village or the municipal government level.

That's difficult, Mr. Speaker, because it's hard to give up what we believe is in the best interests of our communities, but recently we've experienced three various dissolutions in the towns of Springhill, Bridgetown, and the Town of Hantsport who are presently waiting for a decision from the URB.

Mr. Speaker, in each of those examples it was strong leadership. It was the need to address the challenges that they are facing, some more immediate than others, and their ability to respond in a way that best reflects the interests of the larger community. The relationships in Springhill and Cumberland County, and the relationship in Bridgetown and Annapolis County, and the relationship in Hantsport and West Hants are examples of local government working together, and not competing with one another but working together to find a better outcome for their community.

When my colleague from Pictou West referenced recommendation number 18 that is what the One Nova Scotia report had envisioned, and I want to thank my colleague for her comments and support of this particular bill. We believe it is a good piece of legislation.

Mr. Speaker, I want to jump ahead to the comments of my colleague from Kings North. Certainly we recognize the circumstances in the New Minas village and the

initiatives that they've undertaken. I would suggest to the members of this House, and to all Nova Scotians for that matter, that there is no perfect time for government to make tough decisions. We pursue and advance a level of dialogue that we hope is engaging and we hope that it is considering the best interest, from their point of view, but also from government's point of view. Although the challenges in New Minas are no different than any other community - a strong village, a village that has a vision and a sustainable future, but not every village is in the same set of circumstances. Since the provincial municipal fiscal review was released, what we found was tremendous disagreement in the content of that report within our municipal membership but also amongst our village representatives.

I acknowledge the comments of my colleague from Kings North. We will work with the Village of New Minas, going forward. I strongly encourage the Village of New Minas to finish their review. It would be valuable to us as feedback and input into the discussions around future governance models. I would encourage my colleague to reach out to the chair of the New Minas Village Commission. We would value the feedback and the outcomes of the report they have undertaken.

Mr. Speaker, I said earlier, there is no perfect time to make tough decisions. There is a tremendous amount of discussion resulting from the Provincial Municipal Fiscal Review around models of government and the opinions are varied. What we don't want is for that continued uncertainty to go forward. So it is important with government that we make clear decisions and although not everyone will agree, it is important to provide some stability to that environment.

In these circumstances, Mr. Speaker, we listened to the Association of Nova Scotia Villages. I met with their executive and their president is the chairman of the Chester Village Commission. We heard the concerns they had, and it was from that discussion and other inquiries that we were able to take a clear position on one of the recommendations in the Provincial Municipal Fiscal Review that recommended villages be eliminated. Our position was that we sustain villages as they are. I was pleased with the feedback from the village association and other villages around the province specific to that decision.

Mr. Speaker, I do want to speak to the comments of my colleague from Chester-St. Margaret's. I think it's critically important that we talk about the process, as my colleague from Kings North had referenced. My colleague from Chester-St. Margaret's spoke about a lack of consultation with municipalities and villages. She spoke about the right to live in a village or town as people choose and that they should have that democratic right to make that decision.

Mr. Speaker, I want to remind my colleague from Chester-St. Margaret's that it was her government in November 2010 that signed off and supported the Provincial Fiscal Municipal Review in the absence of village participation. It was not this government. I want this House and I want Nova Scotians to understand that.

The important piece going forward, Mr. Speaker, from our perspective as government, we committed, with the decisions that the previous government made, to uphold those where we could. When the Provincial Municipal Fiscal Review was brought to my attention, at the stage it was, about 85 per cent complete, it would be inappropriate for me, as the minister, to bring that process to a conclusion, only to restart the process again.

I acknowledged at that time that the village voice was absent. Mr. Speaker, I want to remind this House that it was the previous government in November 2010 who implemented that review and took that course and directed the UNSM to follow that course in the absence of villages. So for my colleague from Chester-St. Margaret's to stand in this House today and lead the citizens of Chester Village to believe that this is a Liberal issue, a Liberal problem, is not the case.

My colleague also spoke about the auditing process of municipalities. One of the things we've done over the past 18 months, with the co-operation and the work of municipalities and staff within Municipal Affairs, is we embarked upon an auditing process, if you wish to call it that, the Financial Condition Index which has become a very valuable tool designed in part with provincial government staff, designed by municipalities to provide them a template so that they themselves can review and analyze the circumstances of their individual municipality to support or not support their sustainability.

What that does is it allows not only the elected officials, but it allows the residents to review and examine the circumstances of that community. The FCI, the Financial Condition Index, was used in each of Springhill, Bridgetown, and Hantsport. When we embarked on that process in those communities there was a tremendous amount of emotion expressed in each of the three communities.

We've just experienced that in Mulgrave. The first public meeting last Thursday night identified the concerns of residents. They were speaking with emotion and the passion and the love they have for their community. I acknowledge and I want to extend my appreciation for their willingness to come out and participate in that forum, as they did in each of the three other communities - Springhill, Bridgetown, and Hantsport.

The FCI, when presented, based on information that the municipalities feed into the document, to the template, is an accurate assessment and one tool that municipalities are able to utilize in making decisions and building business plans for the future. That tool has been used in each of those communities to advantage. When I met with the Nova Scotia Village Association executive, they spoke about an audit document. They spoke about the need to assess villages in a similar manner, and we've committed in the Department of Municipal Affairs to create an equal model that would serve the same purpose in villages. Although the criteria and numbers of components would be smaller, it would serve the same purpose and allow villages to make similar informed decisions on their future and what they believe that would look like.

To my colleague's point, from Kings North, we have implemented an audit process that will provide valuable support to the villages.

I really want to take a moment, before I conclude, to speak to a couple of points that my colleague for Chester-St. Margaret's raised. She talked about the need for businesses and corporations to be viable and she paralleled that with the village's ability to become a town. I simply want to take my colleague back to Recommendation 18 in the oneNova Scotia report and how that recommendation identifies both the municipal government structure and the regional service structure and the need to find a new governance model - the responsibility of government to find another model that provides a strong, viable future for those communities within a particular region. It doesn't matter if it's Chester-St. Margaret's or if it's Lunenburg or Lunenburg West or Queens-Shelburne, we have to start to look beyond our existing borders with a regional lens so that we can compete with other regions in our country and, literally, globally.

I don't have to tell anyone in this House the strength of technology and the power that that has given individuals with a business mind to find options and opportunities on a global scale. If we continue to isolate ourselves by communities, we will serve ourselves a disservice. It's absolutely essential that all of us in this House, regardless of the political stripe we represent or the community that we represent, work collectively to find governance models that provide a brighter future for our regions and collectively the province.

I'll conclude my comments with a reference that my colleague from Pictou West spoke to. I want to speak about Pictou County and the memorandum of understanding the four municipal units are advancing in that community. In October 2013, there was tremendous animosity between the UNSM and its membership and the provincial government. Today, that's not the case. The work that Pictou County has advanced, the relationship the four municipal units have created and have brought together in a formal memorandum of understanding, is about pursuit of a regional government model. It is about the future of Pictou County, it is about the region of that piece of Nova Scotia, and it is to the betterment of all Nova Scotia. I want to share my comments with my colleague from Pictou West and I ask that she take my comments back to her community leaders to endorse their work, to continue that pursuit, and to collectively find a model of government that serves the purpose of Pictou County and, by example, serves a purpose for all of Nova Scotia. Thank you.

With that, I rise to close debate on Bill No. 103.

MR. SPEAKER: The motion is for second reading of Bill No. 103. Would all those in favour of the motion please say Aye. Contrary minded, Nay.

The motion is carried.

Ordered that this bill be referred to the Committee on Law Amendments.

The honourable Deputy Government House Leader.

MR. TERRY FARRELL: Mr. Speaker, would you please call Bill No. 102.

**Bill No. 102 - University Pension Plan Transfer Act.**

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Minister of Finance.

HON. DIANA WHALEN: Mr. Speaker, I move that Bill No. 102, entitled an Act to Facilitate the Transfer of University Pension Plans to the Public Service Superannuation Plan, now be read a second time.

Last week, I had the privilege of introducing enabling legislation that will give Nova Scotian universities more options for becoming sustainable. This bill makes it possible for universities to transfer their pension plans to the Nova Scotia Public Service Superannuation Plan. It could play a major role in helping universities become more sustainable. Thanks to the University Pension Plan Transfer Act, universities could save millions of dollars and offer more security to their pension plan members.

Yesterday, we mentioned that the members of the Acadia University Pension Plan and university board of governors have already agreed to move to the Public Service Superannuation Plan for their retirement plan. In fact, they voted overwhelmingly to do so. Starting in 2017, Acadia expects to save \$3.6 million a year as a result of moving to the Public Service Superannuation Plan. This change will bring more than 700 current and retired Acadia University Pension Plan members into the provincial plan, which is 30,000 members strong.

Acadia is the first university to join the provincial superannuation plan, but it need not be the only one. A healthy pension plan needs to grow its active members to promote long-term financial sustainability. Increasing plan membership creates an opportunity for risk-sharing. This legislation gives the Nova Scotia Public Service Superannuation Plan the option to grow by adding university pension plans to their numbers. As you can see, this is a win-win situation and win-win legislation.

The University Pension Plan Transfer Act is enabling legislation. It does not create an agreement between universities and the Public Service Superannuation Plan. That will happen through the transfer agreements between any interested university and the independent trustee of the provincial superannuation plan. That will happen through the transfer agreements between any interested university, and the independent trustee of the provincial superannuation plan. The independent trustee will ensure that any university pension plan transfer will remain cost-neutral or beneficial for the larger plan. This legislation simply creates the opportunity for these agreements to take place.

Mr. Speaker, I look forward to hearing from the critics and others in the House on this bill. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Northside-Westmount.

MR. EDDIE ORRELL: Mr. Speaker, it's a pleasure to rise to speak to Bill No. 102 here this evening, about the transfer of university pension plans to the Public Service Superannuation Plan.

Mr. Speaker, we know a lot of people in this province have no pension plan whatsoever. To take a plan that's already in existence and transfer it over to the provincial taxpayer kind of defeats the whole purpose of trying to get universities accountable because they are funded by provincial taxpayers' money anyway. They're going to take one pension plan, transfer it to another pension plan that the taxpayer is going to fund again. It almost seems like they're trying to move money around to make it look like the universities are going to be sustainable, but it's still going to be on the backs of the taxpayers of the Province of Nova Scotia.

Mr. Speaker, the bill talks about transferring in whole or in part the liabilities of the plan. If the assets were in place already in the plan they're already in, there would be no need to transfer those assets into the superannuation plan of the province.

Mr. Speaker, the question I have with this bill is, will the body from which the money, the plan, is being transferred make up the difference in the plan if it's already unfunded? If it's an unfunded pension plan there's a shortfall somewhere, so either the people going into the superannuation plan are going to be topped-up, funded by the province, by the university as leaving, or are they going to take a cut in their pension because of the unfunded liability they carry into the plan? That's one of the questions I have.

You know if we transferred the risk of the university pension plans to the province, it's also a risk to the taxpayers of Nova Scotia. If the funding is not met in their projections over the years, the taxpayers will have to make up the difference.

Mr. Speaker, who will be investing in this pension plan? Sure, it will be the people who are already in the plan, but it will also be the taxpayers in the Province of Nova Scotia.

Mr. Speaker, we just heard the minister say that in 2017 Acadia hopes to save \$3.6 million. They are going to save that because they're not paying into the Acadia pension plan. Who is going to make that payment? Putting 30,000 new members in the Public Service Superannuation Plan, it's great to have new members but if that plan doesn't meet projections in the amount of money it is going to grow with, somebody is going to have to fund that pension plan. If it's part of the superannuation pension plan, it's going to be those members who are in it already or the taxpayers of the Province of Nova Scotia.

We know that growing a membership is great, but who is going to pay the unfunded portion? Mr. Speaker, allowing the universities to increase, to take the cap off their tuition this year and transferring the pension plan over is great, it looks good on paper, it makes the universities look like they are being sustainable but there's still a cost coming to the taxpayers of the Province of Nova Scotia, it's still downloaded on the taxpayers of Nova Scotia.

Mr. Speaker, I look forward to the comments from the minister on this, but I also look forward to this going to Law Amendments Committee to see where this goes, to see how it shakes down. Thank you very much.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Acting Leader of the New Democratic Party.

HON. MAUREEN MACDONALD: Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to rise in my place to make a few remarks on Bill No. 102, the University Pension Plan Transfer Act.

I want to start by saying I think we all recognize the complexity of pension plans - and I certainly recognize the complexity of pension plans and I don't pretend in any way, shape, or form, to have a great deal of expertise in this area. It's a very complicated area and one where there are many, many people who dedicate their entire professional careers into the features of investment and managing pension plans.

As we know, pension plans in public sector organizations and in private sector organizations have been under a lot of stress in the past, well, probably 15 years or more, but particularly, I think, in the last number of years, where we have seen declining interest rates and the return on the rate of investments has left many, many plans struggling to remain solvent in some ways.

My colleague from Northside-Westmount just talked about the unfunded liabilities. We have seen a number of the plans in the province have pretty significant unfunded liabilities. The public sector pension plan for a long time had a substantial unfunded liability. The Teachers' Pension Plan still has a significant unfunded liability. We know that in the last number of years, the university pension plans have indeed had some challenges. I know that we have made some adjustments in this Legislature to provisions for the Dalhousie Pension Plan, for example.

Now, I and our caucus are not opposed to this legislation, but we're not at the point where we're going to support this legislation either. We have questions about this legislation - we have a lot of questions about this legislation. I know, for example, that the number of people who are members of the Public Service Superannuation Plan has started to shift in terms of more people drawing on that plan than people coming into the plan. I don't know if it's that stark, but there are less and less people. With a government that is downsizing the number of public servants, there will be less people contributing to a plan that still has a fairly substantial number of people drawing on that plan.

The idea of building the base of that plan is perhaps a very valid idea. However, there are these questions about those plans that are brought into the Public Service Superannuation Plan - which, by the way, is in very good shape today as a plan. It's in excellent shape, and so I think the concern would be that we want that plan to continue to be in very good shape. If it ended up in a situation where it was in any way having to take on unfunded liabilities from new entrants into the plan, then that advantage that we have gotten will have been lost. The advantage of having put that plan on a stable footing will be eroded and we'll be right back where we started from.

I can well understand why a university, such as Acadia for example, would see this as an excellent opportunity to stabilize their own plan and be part of a more secure public superannuation system, but I don't know what that means really for the future of the plan. If you had, let's say, NSCAD coming into the plan, St. F.X. coming into the plan, all of the unfunded liabilities with some of those plans could have repercussions on a very stable plan. These are questions I have and I know the minister is listening very carefully and will provide us with some answers and some assurance and some certainty that these things have been considered by the government. We just simply don't have enough information.

The final thing I would say on this bill is that the minister and her comments in, I think, the release that went out talked about the savings that will accrue, for example, to Acadia if they join this plan. If the bill proceeds, they are in the magnitude of more than \$3 million annually. My question would be whether or not the government has considered asking the university to reinvest some of those savings in keeping tuitions at an affordable rate for students rather than accruing these savings and we're not really sure where they will be reinvested within the operation of our universities.

We have another piece of legislation that we will be debating shortly with respect to the affordability and the sustainability of our university sector, and I look forward to discussing that, but I'm disappointed that we didn't hear about any of the reinvestment into making universities more affordable, particularly for students. If we're going to assume unfunded liability and risk into the public sector, into our Public Service Superannuation Plan, then I think it is incumbent on us to ensure that there are benefits that accrue to probably the most vulnerable and disadvantaged, in some ways, students who are bearing growing and growing debt loads. The cost of tuition is spiralling beyond the ability of some students to get access to a university education and then the pressures that are place on our young people, if they do get access, and the need to leave our beautiful province to find gainful employment someplace where they can actually have a wage that will help them pay off those large debt loads.

With those few words I look forward to listening to any interveners who appear before us at the Law Amendments Committee on a bill that I think, may look quite innocuous but is anything but, in terms of some larger issues and implications.

MR. SPEAKER: If I recognize the minister it will be to close the debate.



The honourable Minister of Finance and Treasury Board.

HON. DIANA WHALEN: Mr. Speaker, I do rise to close debate on Bill No. 102 and I wanted to answer a few of the questions that were raised by the two members opposite in their discussion about this Bill No. 102. First of all I'm surprised that the member for Halifax Needham did not make a greater case about the good work that was done under her government to set the Public Service Superannuation Plan on a solid footing because that was something that was done a number of years ago. The Pension Services Corporation was created. The Public Service Superannuation Fund, if you remember at the time - a great deal of money was committed towards its liability but it was left 100 per cent funded. There was an adjustment to pension indexing so it isn't automatic unless it's 100 per cent. It was really rolled out to be set on a solid footing.

Here we are a few years later; I understand in the preparation for today, speaking to our staff, that they are around 100 per cent funded today. So the member opposite perhaps not had been thinking about that but the former Finance Minister, Graham Steele, had done something that was pretty courageous and difficult and at that time, in Opposition, we went for a briefing on what went on, because people were saying, oh, the pension has been bailed out and it is super expensive, but when we heard it, we said, this is in the long-term interest of Nova Scotia. We said that here in government too. If you're doing something, if you're doing the right thing and it's in the long-term interest of Nova Scotia, it should be acknowledged and we acknowledge it from previous governments.

That work of the previous government, setting the plan on a strong footing meant - and this is very important to the member for Northside-Westmount in Cape Breton, in North Sydney - that members of your caucus realize that the fund is well funded. In setting it up with that arm's length pension agency, the Government of Nova Scotia is no longer required to backstop that plan. That means if it gets underfunded, we are not on the hook. Taxpayers of Nova Scotia are not on the hook. We are out of that game.

AN HON. MEMBER: Members of the plan are not.

MS. WHALEN: Absolutely, if the plan is not well managed. It's important to note our obligation is as the employer. We still have an obligation to match the contributions of our members, just like every employer in the province that has a pension plan, so we continue to do that. But we set up this agency with a solid footing, with 100 per cent funding, with new rules and I know there are still - and I appreciate it - there are some unhappy people who are pensioners because it isn't as guaranteed as it was before.

The previous government set it up to be solid. It still is today and this is why this move, the bill that's before us, is about enabling legislation to let the people that run the pension plan - that would be our pension agency, Nova Scotia Pension Services Corporation, and their trustee. They have a board and they have a trustee - that person has a legal fiduciary duty to protect the members of the plan. That's how you choose somebody

to be your trustee for a pension plan. They have to take on the responsibility to ensure that nothing is agreed to, nothing is done that will harm the plan.

They can't guarantee the returns in the market. They can't guarantee some of the risks that are out there because every pension plan is subject to the low interest rates or the vagaries of the markets, as you look at the capital markets. But they engage in the best possible financial management for the plan, get the best advisors and invest the money to get the best return possible. That's their job and they would never enter into any arrangement that is going to weaken the plan for existing members.

The whole premise of this bill is that we are allowing the trustee to sit down and enter into an agreement - in this case with Acadia University, but in future it might be other universities to say, is there an advantage to both of us to have these plans join together? In the Acadia instance, those 700 members, that's a very small pension plan. That includes retirees and working members. It doesn't give it a lot of strength or a lot of depth when you only have 700 members in a plan. There are not a lot of people to go to when it's underfunded. It's not robust, if you like. If you join a plan that has 30,000 members, the risk is spread much more widely; individually the risk is much smaller and there are some real savings for everybody involved.

I wanted to mention this too. First, I want to be absolutely clear though, to the member for Northside-Westmount, there is no obligation for the taxpayers to bail out. That's an old situation; it goes back four years or more. I'm not sure which year Minister Steele did that but it goes back some time and what we're looking at today is a much stronger, independent plan where we are the employer. We will always make our payments and our obligations but nobody is coming back to the taxpayers of Nova Scotia if the markets don't perform well or if they haven't been well invested.

Members of the plan and the pensioners as well sit on a committee together to follow and monitor and know what's going on and they entrust a person called the trustee to look out for their interests. That's really important.

What we have before us is enabling legislation and it doesn't make the deal happen. It just sets the ground rules that say now the trustee from the Public Service Superannuation Plan can sit down with the administrators of the Acadia plan and work out a transfer agreement that isn't going to negatively impact our plan, the Public Service plan. They will be responsible for the nitty gritty, the ins and outs. All the liabilities and the transfer of assets and liabilities will take place but they will have to ensure that it's being done in such a way that it doesn't impact the current members of our plan and is of benefit to the Acadia plan. As I said, being a member of a plan that has only 700 members, it doesn't give you a lot of security and their plan is not as well funded.

Another part that makes it attractive for them to come and join the superannuation plan is that because they were a small plan, their administrative fees are higher, and I know

there are a few people who have worked in investments who understand that - if you have a small pool of money you pay more to administer it or get it invested, and if you have a much larger pool of billions of dollars that allows you to get some real economies of scale. Now the Acadia pensioners, as they join into this plan, will have that advantage.

The return on investment that they forecast is over 1 per cent higher in the Public Service Superannuation Plan than it is in the Acadia plan. So that may not sound like a lot, but when you're talking about hundreds of millions and billions of dollars, getting one point higher or 1.5 points higher is really significant. I know that the Acadia plan is 5.- something - I don't have it exactly in front of me, but the plan that we operate is over 6 per cent. You are looking at a point higher that's worth, really, millions of dollars to the plan when Acadia comes to join. It's a benefit to them - their projections will be a higher return on the money investment and that's partly because there's going to be less administration fees, and partly because it's a larger organization with a lot of resources to go back to.

I think we have to look at this. I said in my opening remarks for second reading that it's a win-win I think for everybody. It's going to help the university be on a stronger footing because they will also see their huge liability, which so many organizations carry for pensions, they will see that liability decrease because their pension plan will join in with the security and the size of the Public Service Superannuation Plan. So that's going to be a great savings and support to the university.

For the members, they'll also see that they have more security, their plan will be better funded, they won't have that insecurity of wondering if there would be a time when the fund hasn't enough resources and the university doesn't have the money to pump in to bring it back to a good level of funding. Overall, we've reduced the risk all the way around by going with this plan, and I think that risk sharing is a big part of it and the larger pool of members is a huge part of it.

The Acadia members in that plan, the 700 active and retired members, agreed overwhelmingly - I believe it was almost 90 per cent of the members who voted agreed to do this. They see it as beneficial. There will be some changes in their benefits or in the formulas. We were asked at the bill briefing and I think some might be beneficial and some not as much, but the union members - or the members of this plan, I should not say they are union, I don't know what their circumstance is - the members of this pension plan know that they've had a chance to review it and they've had a chance to vote on it and they've said overwhelmingly, almost 90 per cent, said yes let's go that route because of the long-term sustainability and knowing that when they need to retire and when they need the benefits they will be there because they will be entering a plan that is on a strong financial footing. And I'll say again, I'm really surprised that the Leader of the NDP did not take full credit for some very hard work that was done from her previous government.

Again, this is enabling legislation. It does not leave the taxpayers exposed and it will be good all the way around. We'll not be a party to that transfer agreement; the

Government of Nova Scotia doesn't get involved because it is an arm's-length agency. The pension agency, their trustee will take care to guard against any harm to the existing members of the plan. They have a certain benefit, too, and I think the member for Halifax Needham touched on it, and that is having a larger pool of members. The bigger the pool of members, it's good for them, even though they have 30,000 and that's a big plan in Nova Scotia, maybe our largest, it is not big by national terms or in terms of other places.

The more members they have, again, the better they can protect their members by having more active members paying in and being able to manage that. I think that that's something they'll be looking at, again, having more members to spread the risk a little bit more widely.

Mr. Speaker, I expect this will be well received. It offers the opportunity to other universities should they desire. There is no obligation; there is nothing heavy-handed here, it's simply enabling legislation to allow them to take advantage of something that is good for the pension plan and good for the pensioners who may choose, or the pension members who may choose to come over, and can be good for their institutions. Ultimately we do have some obligation, some commitments I would say with our higher education sector, so we benefit in that indirect way, but not in a direct way.

So with that, Mr. Speaker, I move second reading of Bill No. 102.

MR. SPEAKER: The motion is for second reading of Bill No. 102. Would all those in favour of the motion please say Aye. Contrary minded, Nay.

The motion is carried.

Ordered that this bill be referred to the Committee on Law Amendments.

The honourable Deputy Government House Leader.

MR. TERRY FARRELL: Mr. Speaker, would you please call Bill No. 100.

**Bill No. 100 - Universities Accountability and Sustainability Act.**

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Minister of Labour and Advanced Education.

HON. KELLY REGAN: Mr. Speaker, I move that Bill No. 100, an Act Respecting Accountability and Sustainability of Universities, be now read a second time.

Since I tabled this bill last week, I've heard from many Nova Scotians who welcome the steps we're taking with respect to accountability and cost control at our universities. This is certainly in keeping with what we heard last Fall during our consultations about the future of Nova Scotia's universities.

I've also heard from some parties who have concerns with certain aspects of this bill. I want to take the opportunity to remind the members of this House why we brought this legislation forward.

Mr. Speaker, the reality is this: universities across the country are struggling to rein in costs and balance budgets while offering students high-quality education. If nothing is done, our universities here in Nova Scotia are facing an annual deficit of tens of millions of dollars in just two years' time. Universities struggling with serious budget shortfalls have had to come to government for help. That can't continue.

Bill No. 100 does two things: it requires universities to be more accountable, and it gives universities two potential processes to restructure themselves. I think we can all agree that accountability shouldn't be left to chance. It should be law. The Universities Accountability and Sustainability Act requires more standard financial reporting and gives government a clearer picture of the universities' books. It has teeth, up to and including the authority to refuse or withhold grants in extreme circumstances. Universities will have to provide financial reports and updated financial forecasts every year.

Under this part of the legislation, universities would also have to set outcomes and measure progress in meeting them. These outcomes would be developed with the university and would align with both the university's priorities and provincial priorities. Of course, they would also respect the university's autonomy and the principles of academic freedom.

That's the first part of the legislation - more accountability and cost control. I liken it to an early warning system that will help catch problems before they become emergencies.

The second part of the legislation gives universities tools to restructure themselves. I look at it like an insurance policy, Mr. Speaker - good to have, but something you hope you'll never have to use. If we approach this the right way, the accountability piece, the first piece of the legislation, should keep universities from ever having to use the revitalization process, that second part.

We have to give them options to get back on the right track. A revitalization plan will help universities restructure financial and academic affairs and gives them a clear process and the time to deal with serious financial issues and make changes to ensure they are here for the long term.

There are really two main scenarios where universities could use a revitalization plan. First, a university could proactively use this process if future trends point to financial trouble, like predictions of a significant loss of research funding or a drastic decline in enrolment. In this instance, Section 8 - the section around the extension of collective bargaining - does not apply.

The other scenario is more serious. In this case we're talking about a university that is in real financial distress. In other words, it may not be able to keep operating or pay wages in the near term. Without this legislation, the only option a university would have currently would be to begin the receivership and ultimately the bankruptcy process. Imagine the impact that would have on students and the people employed by the university - its professors, its clerks, and its students. It would completely destroy the university.

Bill No. 100 gives universities another solution. A facilitator and an advisory committee would work with the university to develop the plan and consult with stakeholders, including students, staff, faculty, and unions.

Mr. Speaker, revitalization plans will consider a wide range of issues that can cut costs or raise revenue. Those issues could include research and learning goals, collaboration with other universities and partners, staffing, and the impact of the plan on all students.

If a university can show it's at risk of financial collapse and is in the midst of collective bargaining, it would have an option to extend negotiations beyond the end of the planning process. It only happens if the university can demonstrate a significant operating deficiency. Independently verified financial documents would have to clearly show that a university couldn't continue to operate unless something was done. If granted an extension, it would mean that the ability to strike or lockout would be suspended and a final collective agreement could not be signed until the planning process is complete.

I want to be clear that negotiations can continue while the planning process is underway and the option to strike or lockout or finalize an agreement is back on the table once the revitalization plan has been finalized. An extension will allow everyone in the university community to focus on the plan's development to ensure the university is around and healthy for the long term. Let's be honest; if a university is fighting for financial survival, a strike or lockout could be the final nail in the coffin.

The Universities Accountability and Sustainability Act is the first of its kind in Canada. It's about holding our institutions accountable and making sure our universities are here for years to come. Regular financial reporting and projections will give a clearer picture of universities' financial situations and help catch issues before they become emergencies, and revitalization plans offer a tool of last resort to help universities in significant financial trouble get back on track.

Acadia President Ray Ivany summed it up perfectly: ". . . when you have millions of dollars of public money being put into any activity, there's an onerous responsibility that goes with that . . . The earlier, quite frankly, that you can identify risk factors . . . the greater the number options you have to deal with that . . . I see the university sector as one of the most important assets in the province and freely accept that it's our responsibility to

get more out of that investment that the province has in the institutions for all kinds of economic, social and cultural reasons.”

It’s hard to argue against legislation that will hold our universities accountable and make sure they’re here for years to come. I believe in this bill and its intent to keep universities here for the long term. I expect that my colleagues across the floor may have some other views and I look forward to hearing a range of views as it goes through the legislative process.

MADAM SPEAKER: The honourable member for Northside-Westmount.

MR. EDDIE ORRELL: It’s a pleasure to rise to speak to Bill No. 100 this evening, the Universities Accountability and Sustainability Act.

Madam Speaker, let’s not kid ourselves. Accountably for universities is a good thing. We’ve heard it from students, we’ve heard it from administration, and we’ve heard it from residents that more accountability is necessary when such large pockets of public money are being spent in this province.

All universities in this province need to get their house in order so they can provide a good quality of education for our students. This will allow the universities to compete on a level playing field throughout the province. There will be no special deals for any university; it will be all out in the open.

The significant cost growth we have seen with our universities is a real concern. It is important that we also consider how the cost growth of universities is passed on to our students. When we’re talking about taxpayer investment, more accountability is always a good thing. It is also good that expectations and processes will be clear for the universities.

While this bill does provide more detail, before this legislation, it was still the responsibility of the minister to ensure accountability for universities. For example, in the old Universities Assistance Act, which this bill is replacing, the minister had the authority to “prescribe the terms and conditions upon which a grant may be made”.

While universities are in trouble, the provisions of collective bargaining may continue and be extended as a good thing. My understanding is that the only way anything would happen where it’s going to be suspended is when a university is in severe trouble. I hope that that’s the case. I hope that that gets out to the people who are working in universities and realize that while in severe trouble this could possibly sink that university.

It will provide added stability to the university as it determines its future during the revitalization process. This is what we must try to avoid. We must remember that university accountability is for taxpayers and for students. If the cost growth for universities is reined in but students continue to pay for ever-rising tuitions which they cannot afford, this

becomes a real problem. When looking at the legislation we must also not lose sight of the other actions of their government - we are still concerned about the elimination of the graduate retention rebate and the impact of the removal of that support had on our students.

We are also concerned about the one-time market adjustment we have students rising through and student's tuition. Despite this accountability legislation, the government has given universities a free pass to raise tuition by more than 3 per cent if they feel so. They are moving ahead with this despite the fact that our own consultations indicated that Nova Scotians did not support this. We must also remain concerned that lifting the cap on tuition for graduate students will not be balanced out by the department's graduate research scholarships. We must also be mindful of our ability to attract out-of-province and international students, many of whom come to Nova Scotia and want to stay and work here. We must ensure that rising tuition does not impact our ability to attract these young people.

More accountability for universities and clear rules is a good thing. It is our hope that this legislation will help the cost growth of universities be curbed so that savings can be found for taxpayers and students. Young Nova Scotians want, and deserve, a formal education that prepares them for good-paying jobs right here at home in Nova Scotia.

Let's see what has to be said in Law Amendments, and let's hope that as this passes through the process we will hear from educators, we will hear from students, and we will hear from the universities to see what they think of this bill. I know accountability is a good thing and we would like to see that and we hope that if universities become accountable a university education for a young person, or an older person, in this province who wants to better themselves will be affordable for all. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

MADAM SPEAKER: The honourable Acting Leader of the New Democratic Party.

HON. MAUREEN MACDONALD: Madam Speaker, I'm pleased to have an opportunity to rise in my place and speak on Bill No. 100, the Universities Accountability and Sustainability Act. I'm not sure where to begin with respect to this Act that is in front of us.

You know, I thoroughly agree with the previous speaker - accountability is extraordinarily important and it's really extraordinarily important in all of our institutions that receive public funding, but this bill really very much isn't about accountability in terms of public funding. Let's be clear about that, and let's talk about the deficiencies in this bill.

First I want to say that I'm really very proud that I come out of the university sector in this province. Before I was elected to this Chamber, I was a member of faculty at the School of Social Work at Dalhousie and before that I had the privilege of attending not only Dalhousie, but St. FX in Antigonish, and I have the greatest respect and admiration for the universities in the province and the university sector in many ways.



This sector is very important to our province; it's a sector that employs, literally, thousands of Nova Scotians - not hundreds, thousands of Nova Scotians. I know that the faculty at Dalhousie alone is about 900, and for every faculty member there are probably three, I would say there are probably three non-faculty members - people who clean the buildings, maintain the buildings, people who are clerical and administrative support staff, people in the libraries. People throughout those facilities that support that small core of faculty which I had the privilege of being among. It's a sector that is very, very important in our province.

Then on top of that are all the students in our universities who are from our province, outside our province, and outside of our country. We recognize that this is a very important sector. It makes an enormous contribution to the economy of the province, but at the same time, it is a sector that is expensive for the province. I think the minister has said at different times that it's a \$300 million investment.

It's no secret that as a small province, we have struggled to financially support our many universities. The federal-provincial funding formula does not work to this province's advantage. I recognize all of those things. You'd have to be kind of out of it if you didn't recognize that that's the challenge.

There have been many, many studies into the university sector in our province, and not a lot of creative solutions to how we deal with this challenge. So we're left with this dilemma, and I don't envy the government. I don't envy the minister. It's a dilemma that has been faced by previous governments of two different political stripes. We have this asset that's very valuable and is a strength to the province and holds great potential for our prosperity, but it's also very expensive, and at times unsustainable. The whole question of affordability is there.

Universities exist in a really competitive environment nationally, and internationally as well. This adds a level of complication. I know when people are choosing where to study in higher education, the factors are often the cost, the quality of the education, and the reputation and the culture of the environment you want to study in.

I look at my own life. I grew up in a family where nobody had been to university. Education was really important to my family, but I was the oldest, and when I started talking about going to university, my father said that it was too expensive. Many people have heard me joke about my dad telling me that I would go to vocational school and take hairdressing. That's the truth. I had a brother coming behind me, and my dad basically said, we will be able to maybe put one of the three children through university, and it will be the boy, because it wouldn't be wasted - a university education wouldn't be wasted.

My dad lived to regret those words, which I reminded him of on a regular basis, every time I graduated from a different university. (Applause) It got to the point where he thought I would never have a real job.

I think a university education is something that many people ascribe to, but are not necessarily able to afford, and so the university sector is competitive and when people look at such a large investment they look at - where am I going to be able to afford this? Where is the program that is going to really meet my aspirations and help me become a gainfully employed person and somebody who can contribute to my community and my society, and what kind of life experience, will it be?

Now the bill in front of us, unfortunately, does not do a thing with respect to the affordability and the cost of a university education. Perhaps it wasn't meant to do anything with respect to the cost of an education. We heard on the weekend, Madam Speaker, that Cape Breton University is the first out of the gate with the increasing of tuition with the removal of the cap, and we're going to see a 20 per cent increase in tuition in Cape Breton. I can't help but wonder what kind of an impact that is going to have on the young people of Cape Breton and also in terms of its competitive position in this really competitive environment where cost is a factor. Does this bill do anything to help in that situation? It doesn't.

When I and other people, I think, chose the programs we went into, we wanted to go into a program that was recognized, that was of high quality, that we would be able to, as I said, make a contribution to our community and our province - find a good paying job, pay off our student loans, and what have you. This bill doesn't lay out any of the mechanisms that would hold a university accountable for the quality of the education that it is delivering. So it fails on that account. It fails on affordability and ensuring that cost is competitive and affordable. It fails on the question of quality, quality assurance and the employability of the students who are coming out of the programs.

The other thing that students look at, they look at reputation and culture. They look at - is there a sports culture for people who are really interested in sports? Do the departments have hotshot researchers and publishers and thinkers? Is there somebody in the faculty who I recognize because they have been dynamic like some of the people we see in our ocean sciences department here? I always think of Boris Worm who is studying sharks and is quite inspirational. Sharks are not something I ever had much interest in until Professor Worm started talking about his research and his work on CBC Radio.

Does this legislation deal with questions of reputation and culture? Sadly we've seen the other side of reputation and culture. We have had now in Nova Scotia a couple of very damaging incidents of sexual misconduct, I guess I would say, in our universities where the kind of misogyny that was reflected in the chant in the orientation program at Saint Mary's and more recently all of the antics at the dental school have really, I think, in many ways, led to the real possibility that programs and universities in our region have had to deal with questions of their reputation. Those incidents become damaging for an institution where young people are looking for a program and they have a lot of choice. They have a lot of different places they can go and any negative publicity about a program they might have been considering will result in their deciding, no, I'm not going there.

Does this bill do anything to assure us that universities have in place the kinds of structures and policies and supports to make sure sexual harassment and assault and misogyny are removed from those spaces? It's not in this bill. That would be important, I would think, if you were going to bring forward a bill that would talk about the sustainability and the accountability of our institutions. This bill has some really serious deficiencies.

As I said, I totally agree with the idea that universities should be more accountable. There needs to be more transparency. It's a bit of a juggling act because at the same time, they are autonomous organizations, institutions of higher learning.

One of the things that a prior government did was introduce more accountability by making it required that if people were earning \$150,000 or more, their salaries were posted. That made these institutions a little more accountable. I think in that process, we discovered that at least one of the university presidents of one of the smaller universities was making almost as much as the president of the largest university. Before that, that was unknown. In another case, we had a university president whose university was in serious financial trouble who wasn't in the province - or the country, as a matter of fact - for a considerable period of time during the height of the financial crisis. We've seen NSCAD - that we all love - a former president of NSCAD go on an expansion and spending spree that jeopardized the future of that institution and left this province and no accountability for those decisions.

We have seen some pretty unaccountable behaviour at the highest level of our universities that you could imagine. This bill actually does not address those problems or how to make university presidents and their administrations more accountable. How can this be a university accountability bill if it doesn't address those problems - if it doesn't give us the capacity to address those problems? A university administration that goes on a spending spree and builds all kinds of new buildings on a university campus, and then they don't have the operating money to sustain.

There is accountability in this bill, but who is going to be held accountable for those problems? Well I'll tell you, Madam Speaker, who is going to be held accountable - the electricians in the university system are going to be held accountable; and the teaching assistants, they're going to be held accountable; and the payroll clerks, they're going to be held accountable; and the instructors, they're going to be held accountable; and the part-time teachers who make obscenely low wages, they're going to be held accountable; and the faculty are going to be held accountable. That is who is going to be held accountable in this bill.

How are they going to be held accountable? Well their collective agreements are going to be suspended. If a university gets into financial difficulty, they're not going to be allowed to collectively bargain, they're not going to be allowed to go on strike, they are not going to be able to do grievances . . .

HON. DIANA WHALEN: In exceptional circumstances.

MS. MACDONALD: In exceptional circumstances, I heard the Minister of Finance and Treasury Board say.

So irresponsible management can go on a flight of fancy and leave a financial mess and the staff from the cleaners to the faculty will bear the responsibility for that, with Bill No. 100.

Well big surprise that this government has done that to the workers in our university system. This is what this government thinks of the workers in our health care system; it's what this government thinks about the workers in the film industry; and now this is what this government thinks about workers in our university sector. It's very, very concerning, and very, very disappointing.

This government had an opportunity to bring in a real piece of legislation to hold university administrators accountable, and they didn't do it. This bill is misnamed entirely.

The other thing I want to draw members' attention to here - and I listened carefully to the minister when she made her remarks - there's nothing new about workers in universities suspending collective bargaining during a crisis - NSCAD did it. The faculty union and the other unions at NSCAD did it. They didn't need a law to tell them that that was the right thing to do, they did it voluntarily.

All the health care unions in this province - the Nova Scotia Nurses' Union, the Nova Scotia Government Employees Union, CUPE, Unifor, the Service Employees International Union - they all suspended collective bargaining when H1N1 reared its head in the province and they were actually at the table. Some of those unions were at the table and then other unions in this province followed suit - the Teachers Union, the instructors in the community colleges, and they did it because they recognized that there was a greater good than their own particular interests and I want to remind members of this House that the members of these organizations are Nova Scotians and they know how to put their province first and they know how to put their institutions first when they are in financial trouble, it has been demonstrated and they don't need any heavy handed, ham-fisted law to make them do it.

That's what Bill No. 100 is. This is the fifth piece of anti-worker legislation that the McNeil Government has brought forward in under two years. Bills Nos. 30, 37, 1 - I can't remember what the other one was but it was around first contract legislation, and now this one. It's so clear that this government learned absolutely nothing with the fiasco they made of Bill No. 1. This government has no difficulty eroding the rights of working people, the right to withdraw your labour as a means to get a fair collective agreement.

I understand that in the health care sector, when you are dealing with life and death situations - and I know that, very well - there is a difference, but in the university sector, to take this approach to the rights of people who work in this sector is breathtaking to me. How little this government values, respects, the hard-won rights of working people in this province; the constitutional rights, the charter rights that the court, our Supreme Court over, and over, and over again upholds.

There is nowhere in the country where legislation like this Bill No. 100 exists, nowhere in the country. I can assure members that people across the country are watching to see what happens on this bill. It gives me no comfort in knowing that our province is increasingly being looked on as kind of a backwater with respect to the rights of workers. We have not been in this situation for a very long time. We will be in the Law Amendments Committee, listening with great interest to people who come forward to talk about Bill No. 100 and how they understand Bill No. 100 and the impact that they see Bill No. 100 having.

I'm afraid that this bill is a bill that requires serious, serious redrafting if the minister truly wants an accountable, sustainable university system. She's not going to get it with what's here. This sector deserves better than this. It deserves a lot better than this. It needs good legislation to help it be more accountable and more sustainable, but that's got to start at the top. Accountability has to start at the top of these organizations, not at the bottom of these organizations, and that's where this bill fails entirely.

I don't know what kind of consultation happened. I've heard a bit about some of the consultations; I know the students weren't all that happy about the consultations that happened. They were very controlled. They were very confined to a set of predetermined questions that would lead you in a particular direction. But in the last number of days since Bill No. 100 has been introduced, I've had an opportunity to talk with faculty members and members of some of the other unionized groups who work in universities, and I can assure you they did not see this coming. There was no consultation with them whatsoever that would give any indication that this government would go in this direction. I think that the disappointment and anger that people are feeling, that they are the ones who are being held accountable now for the decisions that are being made by a very small but growing group of administration in the university sector, is of great, great concern to them.

As I indicated, this bill does nothing to contain costs. This bill does nothing to require that university administrators do the heavy lifting to make sure universities are affordable. We know that the government has lifted the cap on tuition. This essentially gives carte blanche to the university administration to do what they want with tuition. It will be the young people of our province and from outside who will bear the consequences, and then we will all bear the consequences of that.

Madam Speaker, those are my thoughts on this bill. I'm sure we'll have more opportunity to speak on this bill as it works its way through the House of Assembly and I

look forward to hearing presenters at the Law Amendments Committee. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

MADAM SPEAKER: The honourable Leader of the Official Opposition.

HON. JAMIE BAILLIE: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I am very pleased to rise and just say a few words about this bill. It's a very important one. Certainly, let me start on a positive: efforts to drive more accountability in our system throughout government, in this case to our university sector, are of course good things. We should all look for ways to increase accountability to the taxpayers who ultimately pay the bills, to the students who are on the receiving end, in this case, of hopefully a quality education in our province, to Nova Scotians who want to benefit from an enriched economy, enriched cultural life, enriched educational life, and for the province as a whole.

There are a number of stakeholders who count on the government to enforce accountability to them, and I'm pleased to see a bill that furthers us down that road. Is it a perfect bill? No, it isn't, for a variety of reasons that I'm pleased to enumerate. I can see the minister wants to hear my enumerated list of reasons, and I will get into those, but I do want to start on a positive, that it is important to drive accountability into our system.

Once again, we're faced with a bill from the government which calculates the cost of things but really doesn't understand the value of those very same things. I know this is a bit of a tangent, but we just went through several vigorous weeks of debate in this House about the film industry, where the government saw only the cost and none of the value - which in that case, it was ultimately proven, was multiple times the value to the cost, which is why the government had to make changes to their plans at the end of last week.

By their own admission, they didn't study either the economic value or the tourism value or the cultural value of the film industry to our province, or what it adds to our immigration goals or our demographic goals - like encouraging young people - or our export goals or our foreign direct investment goals. That's a great example.

So here we have a bill that foresees the financial side of the university sector and drives accountability there, but again, does not allow for or contemplate any work into the value that our university sector brings to the province, economically or culturally or otherwise. That is a shame. Nova Scotians, whether they're taxpayers or users of our university system, want to know that they're getting value for dollars received. That ought to be part of the decisions that get made when you're driving accountability through the system.

Of course, part of that value-add comes from whether our university system is affordable to the young Nova Scotians and others from around the world who want to access it. Part of making it affordable is to make sure there's a great accountability for our dollars, and I guess that's where I come down on the accountability side. We're hopefully

ensuring, through increased accountability, that the system remains affordable to Nova Scotia students. I will return to that theme in a minute.

My point is that, yes, of course, who would be against increased accountability? Nobody. It's a general good. We do need more of it. The question before us is whether this bill actually has real accountability or is designed to give the perception of accountability.

Generally speaking, the bill is broken into two big parts. One is accountability and the other is the revitalization plan. The accountability section of the bill is the smallest part of the overall bill. When you look at the provisions that it has for harmonizing financial reporting and defining expectations for funding, you've got to ask, do you really need a bill to do those things? Aren't those things happening now? Isn't the Department of Labour and Advanced Education getting harmonized reporting? Aren't they looking for universities to give them information that they can use to oversee the system? If they aren't, do they need an Act of the Legislature to ask for things that common sense tells us should be part of everyday life?

I'm not arguing against the bill. I'm just saying that I wonder if it really needs a bill in the Legislature to ask the universities to report in a standardized way. Not even to ask, since we're a funder of over \$300 million to universities - to require it, without needing to make it the law.

I remember 10 or 11 years ago, the first memorandum of understanding with the universities was designed and was signed off on. It required some administrative savings from the universities in return for three years of funding, so they could make investment decisions beyond one year. It had real provisions for reporting to the government on how that savings was achieved, and if the minister looks, she'll see that the CFOs or the VPs of Finance of the universities actually got together and they built a common chart of accounts that all the universities could report on. No Act of the Legislature was required to make that happen. It happened through good, strong oversight from the government, Madam Speaker, and I would like to see good, strong oversight from this government of our university sector.

I want to make sure that the bill isn't just a way of appearing to be doing something, instead of actually doing something that the department has every right to ask for already and that is for standard financial reporting to the department for common chart of accounts, as we talked about a moment ago, asking a university to do certain things in exchange for the funding they get.

I suspect the minister will get up and give me all the reasons why it absolutely has to be an Act of the Legislature but I hope one of them isn't to look like we're doing something because it's time that these things actually happened in practice, Madam Speaker.

Now I mentioned a moment ago that of course driving increased accountability should lead to greater affordability for young Nova Scotians to use our system and of course it is one of the ways that that can happen. Madam Speaker, it's important to put this one bill in the context of all of the government's actions to date, when it comes to our university system.

I saw a young man on the news last night, Brandon Ellis from Cape Breton University; I think he is their student union president. He very quickly pointed out that their tuition, which has been allowed to rise beyond the traditional 3 per cent cap, is going to price a lot of his friends and a lot of young Nova Scotians who want to strive to go as high as they can in life, out of the university market, or, if they choose, to go elsewhere to attend university in another province, in Newfoundland and Labrador or in New Brunswick or in Ontario or wherever they choose to go.

And a 20 per cent increase in tuition at CBU, will no doubt have that effect because universities are a very competitive industry, where students, young Nova Scotians, have choices in the hundreds, and we're supposed to be in the business of attracting young people to our province and keeping young people in the province and hopefully not graduating them with a mountain of debt that will take them the first two decades of their working life to dig out of.

Hopefully driving this extra accountability will generate saving but that saving is long lost to the student in the increased tuitions they will pay.

I know one of my colleagues here on this side already pointed out that with the loss of the Graduate Retention Rebate, young Nova Scotia students studying in our universities and graduating have, in the last year, faced the highest tax increase our province has ever levied on anyone in one year. I know now we are almost to the end of April and young graduates working here in the province will be filling out their first tax return, if they haven't already, and sending it off and they are feeling the effects right now of the loss of that rebate in the thousands of dollars per person, the very people who the Ivany report told us we have to encourage more of.

Madam Speaker, on the one hand it is fine - in fact it's a good thing - to drive greater accountability into our universities, but we can't expect that to be the end of the story, particularly if we have questions about whether there's real accountability or just pretend accountability and, on the other hand, overwhelm any saving that might result with higher tuition and lower support for indebted graduates.

Madam Speaker, I think Brandon Ellis did a very good job at describing that on the news last night on behalf of the students of Cape Breton University. I'm sure we'll hear from other students and I'm sure we'll hear from a lot of people involved in the university sector over the next few days.



Madam Speaker, that does bring me to the second part of the bill which is the revitalization plan. Even here I think this House should take some time and really look at what this does because on the one hand I suspect that those who work in the university sector will feel that it's good to know what the rules of the game are if they get into trouble as this part of the bill envisions, if they get into enough financial trouble that they really need to put up their hand and identify the need for a restructuring, that it's good to know what the rules of the game are.

Once again, you've got to wonder if this would ever really happen, because if a university got to this point where they needed to trigger a revitalization plan, I hope they would realize - as I'm sure they would, actually - the great risk they're running to their own feasibility, first and foremost in enrolment for the following year as it becomes plain to everybody in a very public way that that university's very existence is now in question. Even for alumni and donors and others who give of their time and money to make our universities sustainable, the risk that that would erode very quickly is very real. I hope the government has thought of this. I hope the department has a plan to deal with this, because it would be a gigantic step for a university to enter into a revitalization plan as this bill envisions, with all that goes into that, without knowing whether they will basically scare away the next generation of students - the next year's enrolling students - and the donors and alumni who will also be paying attention to these things.

In a way, once again, we ask, is this a real plan or is it a paper plan that will actually never get used? I find it very interesting that the bill very specifically says that it is up to the university to trigger it. In other words, hands-off on good strong financial management of our university sector by this government itself. They do not empower themselves in law to actually ensure, to their own satisfaction, that the universities are sustainable or that they are being managed in an affordable and accountable way. This can only happen if a university has driven itself into the ground and then chooses to trigger the revitalization plan on its own.

What kind of government, wanting to show leadership, would actually stand by and watch all this happen and have nothing to say about it or not even empower itself to deal with it? I absolutely get that there is the need to respect academic freedom and to allow universities to run their own affairs. That is something that I'm sure every member takes very seriously in this House and it should be respected. But if you're going to drive accountability in the system, if you're going to ask for common financial reports, the ability to change the university's grants based on what the government wants the university to be doing, to then say, but if you get into serious trouble, oh, well, that's up to you - I'm not sure if that really is accountable.

In fact, the only person, bizarrely, who exempts herself from accountability in the situation of a serious problem at our universities is the Minister of Labour and Advanced Education, who denies the opportunity to give herself a chance to trigger a review of our universities. Now, we've seen this before in previous acts by this government where the

problems are always somebody else's to deal with. If you have to hold the minister accountable or the government accountable, you're told, well no, that's up to somebody else. If the small school in your area is under review, well, that's got nothing to do with government; you have to go to the school board, that's for them.

Now, if a university is in financial trouble, well, that's got nothing to do with government; you have to go to that university and speak to them. If they raise their tuition by 20 per cent, well, that's got nothing to do with the government; you have to go to the university. Well, Madam Speaker, accountability has to be at all levels. That includes the minister and that includes the Premier and that includes the government, but they've exempted themselves in this bill from part of the accountability chain. That seems to me to be worthy of some further examination here because we want the government to hold itself to the same level of accountability that it's holding our universities to in this case.

I don't know if the minister will agree with this analogy that I'm about to use or not, but as I read through the revitalization plan, it occurred to me that it appeared to be modelled on similar plans in the private sector, like the Companies' Creditors Arrangement Act, commonly known as the bankruptcy Act, which gives a company that has become insolvent the opportunity to restructure its affairs and find a sustainable way forward.

The minister can tell us when she wraps up whether it's a fair analogy or not, but the concept is certainly the same: when a private company reaches a point where it can't pay its bills, basically, it's given an opportunity to restructure. In fact, someone is appointed to oversee it, and it restructures its affairs, including dealing with all of its creditors. Madam Speaker, this bill certainly contains some pretty rough provisions regarding labour relations - collective agreements that are in place, and the ability of the employer to lock out or the union to strike deals with those - but it has none of the provisions that the private sector would have to actually reach an agreement with creditors of the university. The bill is silent on whether universities can turn to private sources that have financed their expansions, their parking garages, their residences, their dormitories, and so on for those that have them.

Many universities use capital funding for their expansions and borrow money, and there is nothing in the bill to say that if someone has lent one of our universities more than they should have, maybe they ought to participate in the restructuring. Only the workers are asked in this case to give a little in the restructuring of the university, and it's kind of an odd choice for the government to make.

I will say that when it comes to the union/labour relations parts of the bill, we really have lost any confidence in the government's ability to legislate in this area. They've already been turned away at least once, if not twice, by bringing bills before this House that could not withstand a legal challenge. Whether this one or not will be up to lawyers to say, but I really am disappointed that government is bringing another bill in that legislates in this area with no support for whether it's valid or not. Now, maybe they'll bring another

arbitrator that will make rulings in this area, but we've been down that road before, and they made a complete mess of it.

I guess what I'm trying to say to the government is, you're going to have to provide a little more information than you have about whether this is a valid way of proceeding under the revitalization plan as it relates to the unionized provisions in the bill.

Should there be a way for our universities to go down the road of restructuring their affairs if any of them got into the financial difficulty that the bill envisions? Well, yes, there should, and a good thing is that there is at least a path forward. At least there is a path forward. The revitalization plan does call for studies of the costs of a university and the ability to transfer assets to other entities and so on, but no talk about the value that that organization brings to its community or to our province. Surely if a university ever got to a point where it triggered a revitalization plan, someone in charge would want to know the value that institution brings to our province, as well as the cost, but that's not in the bill.

I will just summarize by saying that we generally agree with the approach of looking for greater accountability. We continue to have questions about whether this is real new accountability or whether it's just a bill to say what can already be done - which would be a shame, Madam Speaker. We looked at the revitalization plan and have questions about whether it would ever get triggered, knowing the devastating effect on enrolment in the future and on donations in the future that triggering that plan would have - and I'd be interested to hear if the government actually has thought of those things or has a plan for those things because, if not, we have a hard time seeing where this would ever get triggered.

Of course, we're all going to watch closely at the Law Amendments Committee in the next little while, and again when the bill comes back, to see that those questions get answered before the bill gets to a final vote.

So with those few remarks, thank you, Madam Speaker, for your time.

MADAM SPEAKER: The honourable member for Sackville-Cobequid.

HON. DAVID WILSON: Madam Speaker, I'm glad to rise and say a few words on Bill No. 100. I want to associate myself with the comments that my Leader presented in her debate on Bill No. 100. I'm not going to rehash and go over all of the points she made, but I have to say she made a strong argument to what the concerns are toward Bill No. 100.

I listened intently to the minister's comments in second reading and one that stood out to me was her comment of the fact that it would be hard to argue against this legislation. I guess I would agree with the minister if you don't believe in the rights, and protecting the rights, of Nova Scotians, especially Nova Scotian workers here in our province. I say that and I think we've been saying it on a number of pieces of legislation that this government has brought in over the last 16 to 18 months.

I try to figure out and I try to understand what the mindset of the government is when it comes to dealing with legislation that deals with workers and workers' rights here in Nova Scotia. I don't know if it's the fact that the government has a majority that they feel they can bring legislation in, it will pass, it will become law and that's just how it's going to be - but that's not how it is here in Nova Scotia, and that's not how it is here in our country.

We've seen with previous bills like Bill No. 1, that it was a direct attack on the rights of health care workers, and Bill No. 100, it was hidden within the initial announcement, it is a direct attack on the rights of workers, especially workers, of course, who work within and who support our university system.

As was said, there are thousands of Nova Scotians who contribute to the university system that I believe all of us here are very proud in saying that our province plays an amazing and important role in educating not only our young people here in Nova Scotia, but people from around the globe. People come to Nova Scotia to educate themselves and they are able to do that because of those thousands of workers who are there, who are faculty members, who are part-time instructors, people who are maintenance workers who keep the universities running and able to run and provide those opportunities for Nova Scotians and many from outside our province and our country.

The fact that the government believes they can just bring in legislation that erases rights that have been fought so many years for, for generations - I find myself repeating myself from a previous piece of legislation - workers in our province and across the country have worked extremely hard for decades to get rights, and it's not just something that the province can wipe out with a piece of legislation like Bill No. 100. I thought the government would have learned their lesson with previous legislation.

Here in our country we have the Charter of Rights and Freedoms that really is the basis of what jurisdictions across the provinces and territories have to follow. There had been a recent 5 to 2 decision from the Supreme Court of Canada that recognizes that the right to strike is a fundamental part of the collective bargaining process. The provisions in the Charter of Rights and Freedoms protect the right to strike and . . .

AN HON. MEMBER: You could read us the decision. Do you have the whole decision?

MR. DAVID WILSON: Well, I could have. Maybe I should table the decision, but I won't. But there have been jurisdictions like Saskatchewan who thought they had the ultimate right to just bring in legislation that wipes out rights and the protections are in place that fall under the Charter, and we know the outcome. I believe it was January 30<sup>th</sup> of this year when that decision came out from the Supreme Court. In the text of that court decision, it recognized the right to strike. Actually in the decision, it indicated it reduces strike frequencies by making collective bargaining meaningful. The court also noted

Canada's international human rights obligations as a signatory to the international agreements protecting the right to strike under the international law. It's not only our own country that recognizes the rights of workers; it's globally.

The question that we have - and it's not just our caucus. It's many in the labour movement, but it's faculty, staff, and those in labour who are questioning again, does the government have authority to bring in legislation that would wipe out those rights? I would say they don't. I know I asked the minister that question in estimates and I was told that they had done some consultations with lawyers and they feel confident that it would meet that challenge. I guess if this proceeds and Bill No. 100 is passed in this Legislature, then I guess we'll see down the road if it holds up, because I have no doubt in my mind that those Nova Scotians who are going to be impacted by this will ask for a decision.

It's interesting. Today, we and the government were met by people outside who were against Bill No. 100. For those who might not know, there was another protest in Cape Breton along the Sydney-Glace Bay highway, I believe it's called, in front of CBU. Over 300 people were out today protesting against Bill No. 100. They were unable to get up to Halifax today, but they wanted to make sure that government knew that there are many people concerned with the second section of this piece of legislation, Bill No. 100.

The first section, the accountability provision - I think everybody would agree that when an organization, no matter what it is, receives tens, hundreds of millions of dollars of taxpayers' money, there should be a level of accountability. Understood. I think everybody would agree with that. But in this piece of legislation, it's interesting to see that if a university finds itself in dire straits or has severe financial problems, they're going to be given even more power, which baffles us that they can take all these rights away from the workers.

As my Leader indicated, I have great faith in the workers of this province, especially in our university system, that they would be more than willing to work with the administration of that university to get things back on track. They know what's at stake. They know the future of that university might be at stake, which means the future of their employment is at stake. I don't believe for one moment that we would see any of the bargaining units throughout the province who would be in that situation say, no, we're going to continue down a path and we're going to be collectively bargaining to get more benefits and raise our wages. I don't believe that would happen.

I have much more faith in our workers in this province, especially those who work within the university system. They're dedicated individuals. They're not ones that we hear often from. I've been in this Legislature for almost 12 years and I don't recall really having faculty and those associated with the universities coming to the Legislature and starting to bring more awareness around letter-writing and on social media. It just doesn't happen because I don't think we've seen - I know we haven't seen - legislation like this.

The government indicated this will be the first of its kind in the country. That should give you an idea that maybe we shouldn't be the first in the country to bring such draconian results of attack on workers, especially after a recent Supreme Court decision. I mean this will end up costing the government money, when they have to defend this piece of legislation.

We have seen it in other pieces of legislation, Bill No. 1, and they came back at the start of this session to have a do-over and the money spent through the arbitration process, I don't think the government has a tally on it yet, but it was hundreds of thousands of dollars to get to a point where the government could have reached at the start of it, Madam Speaker, if they had just sat down and fully negotiated with the unions to achieve what the government wanted to achieve. I think the same thing could happen here. Why doesn't the government say okay, we understand that there are big concerns here with the workers who are working within the university system?

One group I forgot to say that are also lending their voice in opposition to this bill are the students. They are also concerned that they will be left out of any kind of consultation or talks, if the revitalization plan or program is put in place because it gives all that power.

I think what this does is it takes power away from a productive mechanism to address serious issues and it takes that power and gives it to the administration of the university, and they may be the reason why that university is in financial difficulties. That's what is baffling to me and to our caucus; they are going to give them more power and power to take away rights.

The reason we have the Trade Union Act and the Charter and legislation nationally to protect workers was to make sure that they are part of being protected when an industry, for example, closes down. There have been examples time and time again where those workers' rights were not protected and that's why we have decisions of the Supreme Court of Canada that say workers' rights need to be upheld, they need to be protected and jurisdictions - meaning provinces, territories - cannot just make up legislation that takes those away. That's exactly what Bill No. 100 does.

I foresee, as we go through this process, that we're going to hear from more Nova Scotians and the government is going to try to paint this as oh well, it's just unionized people; the unions want to keep their rights. What Nova Scotians need to be reminded of is that these unions that are trying to protect the rights of unionized workers - these are Nova Scotians, these are workers. They live in communities all across our province and they deserve the respect, I believe, that they have shown over the years when it comes to bargaining and trying to ensure that the viability of our universities continues on.

Yes, through the last number of decades there have been a few labour disruptions, I would agree to that, but by no means do I think it's at a point where government needs to

introduce legislation to rip those rights away, to take them away, to not even allow grievances to happen. So something happens in the university and they're going to suspend the grieving process and the minister can stand up when she wraps it up and try to explain that that's not going to happen. The workers' rights are all there, well that's just not true. This is a deliberate attempt to erode the rights of workers. It's something we've seen from this government time and time again. First it was health care workers, now it's going to be university workers. It's just baffling to see that that is happening here in our province.

Students and workers really are the whistleblowers, Madam Speaker, when they see administration malpractice at our universities. They are the first ones who will sound an alarm if they see something not going right. As a caucus, we have all been in all different positions in this House and who do we hear from? We hear from the student groups when they see administration of universities doing something that they don't think is right, and they make sure that we know about it.

I think through this legislation, it really muzzles those students. It muzzles the workers themselves. They can't even put a grievance in. If they are on strike, that will have to stop. What's not missing in this legislation is the fines against those workers and the unions. I believe the unions could be fined up to \$100,000 - \$10,000 a day if the university decides they're going to implement the revitalization plan, and if they are unfortunately on a strike. If they don't live up to this legislation, they could be fined \$10,000 a day.

Instead, what we'd like to see is a piece of legislation that goes after what the problem is. If it's the administration, then that's what the government should be going after. They should be taking rights away from the administration. The government should be scaling back their ability to cause damage to that university. I'm not saying our universities are going to be going down that road, but we have seen some examples in the past that are concerning. There was what I think was described in one of the news releases as administrative malpractice. After this legislation is passed, that university could have more power to cause more harm to that university, and it will be to the detriment of not only the students but the workers that work there.

As we see Bill No. 100 go through, I don't agree with the minister saying it's going to be hard to argue against this piece of legislation. I find it's going to be hard to agree to this piece of legislation. Unless there are changes to it, we know we won't be supporting Bill No. 100. Thank you.

MADAM SPEAKER: If I recognize the minister it will be to close the debate.

The honourable Minister of Labour and Advanced Education.

HON. KELLY REGAN: I want to thank my colleagues on the opposite side of the House for their very thoughtful comments. I was here taking them down, and I hope I will accurately reflect back what was said, just in answering a few of the issues raised.

I'm not exactly sure how or why a minister would legislate when or how often a president of the university could leave the country, but I don't think I want to get into that level of management. I would point out that at certain points, when you become too prescriptive about what an institution does, that institution's bottom line becomes part of your bottom line. There is an issue around that, about how far we can go.

What I would say is that when I became minister and began getting briefings on the university situation here, it was clear to me there were certain things happening. I remembered back in 2009 when I was first elected and I began as Education Critic. I would go visit university presidents and they would talk to me. A number of them told me that they felt their institution had been seriously disadvantaged by the MOU of 2008. Some of them felt themselves sliding into some financial trouble in 2008 with that particular MOU.

Fast-forward to the previous government, which cut \$35 million in funding from the universities. Some of the universities were coping with that 2008 situation, and then they had the rug pulled out from underneath them. This is not to say that I am excusing financial mismanagement or anything like that, but I do want to put all of this in context, so that people understand that there was no consultation. The NDP just cut \$35 million from our university system over a period of years. I understand they had fiscal challenges to deal with, but that was the decision they took.

Our decision has been a little different. Instead of cutting further in the university system, we have given them small increases. We have given them what taxpayers can bear. Yes, we are expecting our universities to be accountable, but the result of a number of decisions made by three separate administrations means that universities are challenged right now. I just want to put that in context because I know that some folks are worried about tuition increases, as am I. But I do want them to understand that all three Parties have made decisions that have impacted our universities.

When I first became minister, when I began having my briefings about universities, when I looked back in terms of an historical context and I looked at when the two known cases, NSCAD and Acadia, when they got into trouble, there was no way apparently that the government knew what was going on at those universities, I have to believe that, whatever the process was at the time, because there is no way they would have let them slide into that kind of financial morass and make the deals that they did.

So for me, the first thing I wanted to see was an early warning system so that we knew what was going on with universities and, quite frankly, that's how we get accountability. The Act states quite clearly that "The Minister may" - and you go down to designate by regulation institutions, dah-de-dah-dah - "(b) specify the amounts of grants or any grant; (c) specify the terms and conditions upon which the grant is made, including terms or conditions that must be satisfied before all or part of a grant is paid . . ." It then goes on to provide a number of accountabilities that the university may be required to provide including "evidence satisfactory to the Minister of the sustainability of the



university's financial operations, (ii) submit financial documents"- et cetera, et cetera, et cetera - "(v) enter into and comply with an outcomes agreement, and (vi) apply the grant to a specified purpose . . ."

Madam Speaker, we have had successive governments sending money to universities for nursing that wasn't used on nursing. So I'm sorry, but the fact that previous administrations just handed over money and said you should use this for nursing and never checked up to make sure that it was actually happening - I'm sorry, that was not accountability. There are things in place that should have provided accountability, things like MOUs. I have bilaterals with every single university here that lasted for 18 months and those bilateral agreements lay out goals for those universities and things we'd like to see them do and they are mutually agreed upon. So those actually exist.

What I do want to say is the first time one of our universities got in trouble because they didn't make sound financial decisions, I can understand it happening once, but it happened again. My concern was there was nothing there that would prevent it from happening yet again, and that's why we needed to have this accountability piece.

One of the members raised the issue of grievances and said that grievances could not be dealt with if a revitalization plan had been triggered - that's not accurate. In fact, what it is is those grievances that are not related to the revitalization process could still proceed - I want to be very clear on that.

Let me see, what else was there? The members are right, we give our universities \$376 million and it is only right and proper that there be some accountability for that funding. I think the university presidents understand why we would want to have that. I'm really looking forward to hearing what we are going to hear at the Law Amendments Committee throughout the next coming days. And from my honourable colleagues, I really do appreciate their thoughtful comments on the bill and I look forward to proceeding.

With this, I move that we close second reading of Bill No. 100. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: The motion is for second reading of Bill No. 100. Would all those in favour of the motion please say Aye. Contrary minded, Nay.

The motion is carried.

Ordered that this bill be referred to the Committee on Law Amendments.

The honourable Government House Leader.

HON. MICHEL SAMSON: That concludes the government's business for this evening, Mr. Speaker. Tomorrow, we will meet on Tuesday, April 28<sup>th</sup>, from the hour of 1:00 p.m. until 7:00 p.m., at which time, following daily routine, we will do third reading

of Bill Nos. 82, 87, 88, and 90. We will also do second reading of bills introduced today - Bill No. 108, the Financial Measures (2015) Act, and Bill No. 109, the Tourism Nova Scotia Act.

With that, Mr. Speaker, I move that the House do now rise to meet again tomorrow, Tuesday, April 28<sup>th</sup>, from the hour of 1:00 p.m. until 7:00 p.m.

MR. SPEAKER: The motion is that the House now rise until tomorrow between the hours of 1:00 p.m. and 7:00 p.m.

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The House now stands adjourned until tomorrow, April 28<sup>th</sup>, at 1:00 p.m.

[The House rose at 7:51 p.m.]

**NOTICES OF MOTION UNDER RULE 32(3)****RESOLUTION NO. 1567**

By: Mr. Chuck Porter (Hants West)

I hereby give notice that on a future day I shall move the adoption of the following resolution:

Whereas Nova Scotia's first Turnaround Achievement Awards programs for students was introduced by Terra Firma Development Corporation in collaboration with the Annapolis Valley Regional School Board to provide the opportunity for students who have overcome personal and educational challenges to be rewarded for their triumph; and

Whereas Katherine Harvie-Card is a Grade 11 student at Avon View High School who, despite her many life challenges, recognizes the value of her education now and in the future; and

Whereas Katherine's teachers see her evolving into a mature young woman who is intently focused on succeeding as she plans for her future, which includes the Early Childhood Development program through a Nova Scotia Community College;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate Katherine on her determination, self-direction, and self-discipline and wish her great success in achieving her dreams.

**RESOLUTION NO. 1568**

By: Mr. Chuck Porter (Hants West)

I hereby give notice that on a future day I shall move the adoption of the following resolution:

Whereas Nova Scotia's first Turnaround Achievement Awards program for students was introduced by Terra Firma Development Corporation in collaboration with the Annapolis Valley Regional School Board to provide the opportunity for students who have overcome personal and educational challenges to be rewarded for their triumph; and

Whereas after years of struggling in school, Chad Bosworth has found ways to overcome academic challenges by asking for help and giving himself more opportunities at school; and

Whereas Chad has made strong friendships at Avon View High School and now finds ways to be supportive of his classmates when they are struggling;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate Chad on taking a lead role in setting personal goals and wish him all the best with achieving his goal of becoming a Heavy Equipment Operator.

**RESOLUTION NO. 1569**

By: Mr. Chuck Porter (Hants West)

I hereby give notice that on a future day I shall move the adoption of the following resolution:

Whereas Nova Scotia's first Turnaround Achievement Awards program for students was introduced by Terra Firma Development Corporation in collaboration with the Annapolis Valley Regional School Board to provide the opportunity for students who have overcome personal and educational challenges to be rewarded for their triumph; and

Whereas Matthew Boone has attended Avon View High School for the last four years where his attitude has continued to improve, which in turn has allowed him to become more cooperative and respectful; and

Whereas as a Grade 12 student, Matt has his sights on graduation this June, which has become most evident during the past year as staff have witnessed a tremendous change in his desire to succeed;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly applaud Matt for the turnaround he is making in his life and wish him great success in his future.

**RESOLUTION NO. 1570**

By: Mr. Chuck Porter (Hants West)

I hereby give notice that on a future day I shall move the adoption of the following resolution:

Whereas Nova Scotia's first Turnaround Achievement Awards program for students was introduced by Terra Firma Development Corporation in collaboration with the Annapolis Valley Regional School Board to provide the opportunity for students who have overcome personal and educational challenges to be rewarded for their triumph; and

Whereas when Austin O'Donnell began his middle school years, he experienced difficulties in dealing with his emotions and would occasionally find himself feeling frustrated and angry; and

Whereas over the last three years at the West Hants Middle School, Austin has made tremendous progress, his hard work has paid off in the personal relationships he continues to build and he seems happier holding his own in the classroom;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate Austin on his accomplishments and wish him continued success in the future.

#### **RESOLUTION NO. 1571**

By: Mr. Chuck Porter (Hants West)

I hereby give notice that on a future day I shall move the adoption of the following resolution:

Whereas Nova Scotia's first Turnaround Achievement Awards program for students was introduced by Terra Firma Development Corporation in collaboration with the Annapolis Valley Regional School Board to provide the opportunity for students who have overcome personal and educational challenges to be rewarded for their triumph; and

Whereas when Connor Johnson was seriously injured after a hunting accident, he missed the majority of his Grade 6 year; and

Whereas after beginning Grade 7 at West Hants Middle School in a wheelchair and continuing rehab both at school and at home, Connor was able to achieve his goal to leave the wheelchair behind and even managed to maintain a high academic average of 87 per cent;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate Connor on his outstanding achievements and wish him continued success in the future.

#### **RESOLUTION NO. 1572**

By: Mr. Chuck Porter (Hants West)

I hereby give notice that on a future day I shall move the adoption of the following resolution:

Whereas Nova Scotia's first Turnaround Achievement Awards program for students was introduced by Terra Firma Development Corporation in collaboration with the Annapolis Valley Regional School Board to provide the opportunity for students who have overcome personal and educational challenges to be rewarded for their triumph; and

Whereas during his time at the West Hants Middle School, Michael Crossley has made tremendous improvements both academically and socially, which has also resulted in more productive time in the classroom; and

Whereas Michael recognizes the benefits of the support that is in place for him now and moving forward, and has welcomed this support;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate Michael on a job well done and wish him continued success.

### **RESOLUTION NO. 1573**

By: Hon. Keith Colwell (Agriculture)

I hereby give notice that on a future day I shall move the adoption of the following resolution:

Whereas Tony Rodgers is celebrating his 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary as executive director of the Nova Scotia Federation of Anglers and Hunters; and

Whereas Mr. Rodgers has worked tirelessly for the Nova Scotia Federation of Anglers and Hunters, often volunteering his time, skills, and experience to keep the organization vibrant and ensure continuity through the transition of officers over the years; and

Whereas it is hard to imagine the federation without Mr. Rodgers at the helm to maintain that vital communication between the affiliates and sister organizations across Canada;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate Tony Rodgers and thank him for his leadership and commitment to the sport fishing and hunting sectors.

### **RESOLUTION NO. 1574**

By: Hon. Keith Colwell (Fisheries and Aquaculture)

I hereby give notice that on a future day I shall move the adoption of the following resolution:

Whereas Clearwater Seafoods Limited Partnership was named as the 2015 winner of *Food in Canada's* Leadership Award for Stewardship; and

Whereas this award recognizes outstanding Canadian food and beverage processors that demonstrate achievement in growth, innovation, stewardship, community and industry leadership, and health and wellness; and

Whereas Clearwater Seafoods, which has seven fisheries and achieved the widest selection of Marine Stewardship Council certified fisheries of any company in the world, was profiled in the April edition of *Food in Canada* magazine;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate Clearwater Seafoods for winning this year's award and thank them for supporting and encouraging growth and sustainability in Nova Scotia's seafood industry.

#### **RESOLUTION NO. 1575**

By: Hon. Christopher d'Entremont (Argyle-Barrington)

I hereby give notice that on a future day I shall move the adoption of the following resolution:

Whereas anniversaries are an occasion for family and friends to gather together to celebrate the life of two individuals united as one; and

Whereas it was once said that a marriage anniversary is the celebration of love, trust, partnership, tolerance and tenacity, but the order varies for any given year; and

Whereas on February 27, 2015, a very special occasion took place when James and Theresa Dulong of Ste. Anne du Ruisseau celebrated their 50<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate James and Theresa on this remarkable milestone in their life together and wish them many more happy years together.

#### **RESOLUTION NO. 1576**

By: Hon. Christopher d'Entremont (Argyle-Barrington)

I hereby give notice that on a future day I shall move the adoption of the following resolution:

Whereas birthdays are an occasion for family and friends to gather together to celebrate the life of an individual; and

Whereas on December 29, 2014, Joyce L. d'Entremont of West Pubnico celebrated her 70<sup>th</sup> birthday; and

Whereas in reaching 70 years of age, you are blessed to continue being active and share all the memories you have gathered with your loved ones as it is a wonderful reason to celebrate;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate Joyce on reaching this milestone birthday and wish her many more happy birthdays and continued good health.

**RESOLUTION NO. 1577**

By: Hon. Christopher d'Entremont (Argyle-Barrington)

I hereby give notice that on a future day I shall move the adoption of the following resolution:

Whereas birthdays are an occasion for family and friends to gather together to celebrate the life of an individual; and

Whereas on March 27, 2015, Elizabeth E. d'Entremont of West Pubnico, celebrated her 100<sup>th</sup> birthday; and

Whereas to have reached 100 years of age and continue to be active and share all the memories gathered over your lifetime with your loved ones is a wonderful reason to celebrate;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate Elizabeth on reaching this milestone in her life and wish her many more happy birthdays and continued good health.

**RESOLUTION NO. 1578**

By: Hon. Christopher d'Entremont (Argyle-Barrington)

I hereby give notice that on a future day I shall move the adoption of the following resolution:

Whereas birthdays are an occasion for family and friends to gather together to celebrate the life of an individual; and

Whereas on April 19, 2015, Dorothy Amirault of Nakile Home for Special Care, celebrated her 100<sup>th</sup> birthday; and

Whereas to have reached 100 years of age and continue to be active and share all the memories gathered over your lifetime with your loved ones is a wonderful reason to celebrate;



Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate Dorothy on reaching this milestone in her life and wish her many more happy birthdays and continued good health.

**RESOLUTION NO. 1579**

By: Hon. Christopher d'Entremont (Argyle-Barrington)

I hereby give notice that on a future day I shall move the adoption of the following resolution:

Whereas the birth of a child is a momentous event and marks the beginning of a very satisfying journey down a long road, where the rewards far outnumber the challenges; and

Whereas “a new baby is like the beginning of all things – wonder, hope, a dream of possibilities,” as quoted by author Edna J. Leshan; and

Whereas on November 19, 2014, Melissa and Andy Frotten welcomed their son into the world;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate Melissa and Andy on this miraculous event in their lives and wish them many more happy years as parents.

**RESOLUTION NO. 1580**

By: Hon. Christopher d'Entremont (Argyle-Barrington)

I hereby give notice that on a future day I shall move the adoption of the following resolution:

Whereas the birth of a child is a momentous event and marks the beginning of a very satisfying journey down a long road, where the rewards far outnumber the challenges; and

Whereas “a new baby is like the beginning of all things – wonder, hope, a dream of possibilities,” as quoted by author Edna J. Leshan; and

Whereas on January 30, 2015, Jeanette and Joshua Thompson welcomed their son into the world;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate Jeanette and Joshua on this miraculous event in their lives and wish them many more happy years as parents.

**RESOLUTION NO. 1581**

By: Hon. Christopher d'Entremont (Argyle-Barrington)

I hereby give notice that on a future day I shall move the adoption of the following resolution:

Whereas the birth of a child is a momentous event and marks the beginning of a very satisfying journey down a long road, where the rewards far outnumber the challenges; and

Whereas ‘a new baby is like the beginning of all things – wonder, hope, a dream of possibilities,’ as quoted by author Edna J. Leshan; and

Whereas on February 20, 2015, Sylvia and Shawn Surette welcomed their son into the world;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate Sylvia and Shawn on this miraculous event in their lives and wish them many more happy years as parents.

**RESOLUTION NO. 1582**

By: Hon. Christopher d'Entremont (Argyle-Barrington)

I hereby give notice that on a future day I shall move the adoption of the following resolution:

Whereas the birth of a child is a momentous event and marks the beginning of a very satisfying journey down a long road, where the rewards far outnumber the challenges; and

Whereas “a new baby is like the beginning of all things - wonder, hope, a dream of possibilities,” as quoted by author Edna J. Leshan; and;

Whereas on March 24, 2015, Tiffany Nickerson and Jordan Doucet welcomed their son into the world;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate Tiffany and Jordan on this miraculous event in their lives and wish them many more happy years as parents.

**RESOLUTION NO. 1583**

By: Hon. Christopher d'Entremont (Argyle-Barrington)

I hereby give notice that on a future day I shall move the adoption of the following resolution:

Whereas the birth of a child is a momentous event and marks the beginning of a very satisfying journey down a long road, where the rewards far outnumber the challenges; and

Whereas "a new baby is like the beginning of all things - wonder, hope, a dream of possibilities," as quoted by author Edna J. Leshan; and;

Whereas on February 10, 2015, Kelsey and Nick Clegg welcomed their son into the world;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate Kelsey and Nick on this miraculous event in their lives and wish them many more happy years as parents.

**RESOLUTION NO. 1584**

By: Hon. Christopher d'Entremont (Argyle-Barrington)

I hereby give notice that on a future day I shall move the adoption of the following resolution:

Whereas the birth of a child is a momentous event and marks the beginning of a very satisfying journey down a long road, where the rewards far outnumber the challenges; and

Whereas "a new baby is like the beginning of all things - wonder, hope, a dream of possibilities," as quoted by author Edna J. Leshan; and;

Whereas on January 1, 2015, Melanie Muise and Bruce Surette welcomed their son into the world;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate Melanie and Bruce on this miraculous event in their lives and wish them many more happy years as parents.

**RESOLUTION NO. 1585**

By: Hon. Christopher d'Entremont (Argyle-Barrington)

I hereby give notice that on a future day I shall move the adoption of the following resolution:

Whereas the birth of a child is a momentous event and marks the beginning of a very satisfying journey down a long road, where the rewards far outnumber the challenges; and

Whereas "a new baby is like the beginning of all things - wonder, hope, a dream of possibilities," as quoted by author Edna J. Leshan; and;

Whereas on March 10, 2015, Monica and Jeremy Pothier welcomed their son into the world;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate Monica and Jeremy on this miraculous event in their lives and wish them many more happy years as parents.

**RESOLUTION NO. 1586**

By: Hon. Christopher d'Entremont (Argyle-Barrington)

I hereby give notice that on a future day I shall move the adoption of the following resolution:

Whereas the birth of a child is a momentous event and marks the beginning of a very satisfying journey down a long road, where the rewards far outnumber the challenges; and

Whereas "a new baby is like the beginning of all things - wonder, hope, a dream of possibilities," as quoted by author Edna J. Leshan; and;

Whereas on March 12, 2015, Melissa and Neil Roberts welcomed their son into the world;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate Melissa and Neil on this miraculous event in their lives and wish them many more happy years as parents.

**RESOLUTION NO. 1587**

By: Hon. Christopher d'Entremont (Argyle-Barrington)

I hereby give notice that on a future day I shall move the adoption of the following resolution:

Whereas the birth of a child is a momentous event and marks the beginning of a very satisfying journey down a long road, where the rewards far outnumber the challenges; and

Whereas "a new baby is like the beginning of all things - wonder, hope, a dream of possibilities," as quoted by author Edna J. Leshan; and;

Whereas on March 10, 2015, Samantha and Mark Boudreau welcomed their daughter into the world;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate Samantha and Mark on this miraculous event in their lives and wish them many more happy years as parents.

**RESOLUTION NO. 1588**

By: Hon. Christopher d'Entremont (Argyle-Barrington)

I hereby give notice that on a future day I shall move the adoption of the following resolution:

Whereas the birth of a child is a momentous event and marks the beginning of a very satisfying journey down a long road, where the rewards far outnumber the challenges; and

Whereas "a new baby is like the beginning of all things - wonder, hope, a dream of possibilities," as quoted by author Edna J. Leshan; and;

Whereas on November 25, 2014, Mallory and Adam d'Entremont welcomed their daughter into the world;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate Mallory and Adam on this miraculous event in their lives and wish them many more happy years as parents.

**RESOLUTION NO. 1589**

By: Hon. Christopher d'Entremont (Argyle-Barrington)

I hereby give notice that on a future day I shall move the adoption of the following resolution:

Whereas the birth of a child is a momentous event and marks the beginning of a very satisfying journey down a long road, where the rewards far outnumber the challenges; and

Whereas "a new baby is like the beginning of all things - wonder, hope, a dream of possibilities," as quoted by author Edna J. Leshan; and;

Whereas on March 7, 2015, Tessa Cromwell and Trevor Frost welcomed their daughter into the world;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate Tessa and Trevor on this miraculous event in their lives and wish them many more happy years as parents.

**RESOLUTION NO. 1590**

By: Hon. Christopher d'Entremont (Argyle-Barrington)

I hereby give notice that on a future day I shall move the adoption of the following resolution:

Whereas the birth of a child is a momentous event and marks the beginning of a very satisfying journey down a long road, where the rewards far outnumber the challenges; and

Whereas "a new baby is like the beginning of all things - wonder, hope, a dream of possibilities," as quoted by author Edna J. Leshan; and;

Whereas on January 21, 2015, Sarah and Coady Thibodeau welcomed their daughter into the world;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate Sarah and Coady on this miraculous event in their lives and wish them many more happy years as parents.

**RESOLUTION NO. 1591**

By: Hon. Christopher d'Entremont (Argyle-Barrington)

I hereby give notice that on a future day I shall move the adoption of the following resolution:

Whereas the birth of a child is a momentous event and marks the beginning of a very satisfying journey down a long road, where the rewards far outnumber the challenges; and

Whereas "a new baby is like the beginning of all things - wonder, hope, a dream of possibilities," as quoted by author Edna J. Leshan; and;

Whereas on March 12, 2015, Sarah and Ben Hurlburt welcomed their daughter into the world;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate Sarah and Ben on this miraculous event in their lives and wish them many more happy years as parents.

**RESOLUTION NO. 1592**

By: Hon. Christopher d'Entremont (Argyle-Barrington)

I hereby give notice that on a future day I shall move the adoption of the following resolution:

Whereas the birth of a child is a momentous event and marks the beginning of a very satisfying journey down a long road, where the rewards far outnumber the challenges; and

Whereas "a new baby is like the beginning of all things - wonder, hope, a dream of possibilities," as quoted by author Edna J. Leshan; and

Whereas on February 21, 2015, Jessica and Jeremiah Nickerson welcomed their daughter into the world;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate Jessica and Jeremiah on this miraculous event in their lives and wish them many more happy years as parents.

**RESOLUTION NO. 1593**

By: Hon. Christopher d'Entremont (Argyle-Barrington)

I hereby give notice that on a future day I shall move the adoption of the following resolution:

Whereas the birth of a child is a momentous event and marks the beginning of a very satisfying journey down a long road, where the rewards far outnumber the challenges; and

Whereas "a new baby is like the beginning of all things - wonder, hope, a dream of possibilities," as quoted by author Edna J. Leshan; and

Whereas on February 19, 2015, Emma and Devin Madden welcomed their daughter into the world;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate Emma and Devin on this miraculous event in their lives and wish them many more happy years as parents.

**RESOLUTION NO. 1594**

By: Hon. Christopher d'Entremont (Argyle-Barrington)

I hereby give notice that on a future day I shall move the adoption of the following resolution:

Whereas the birth of a child is a momentous event and marks the beginning of a very satisfying journey down a long road where the rewards far outnumber the challenges; and

Whereas "a new baby is like the beginning of all things - wonder, hope, a dream of possibilities," as quoted by author Edna J. Leshan; and

Whereas on April 1, 2015, Courtney Dulong and Kris Anthony welcomed their daughter into the world;



Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate Courtney and Kris on this miraculous event in their lives and wish them many more happy years as parents.

**RESOLUTION NO. 1595**

By: Hon. Lena Diab (Justice)

I hereby give notice that on a future day I shall move the adoption of the following resolution:

Whereas the members of the School Advisory Council for John W. MacLeod and Fleming Tower held a meeting on February 12, 2015, which I was pleased to attend; and

Whereas Co-Chairs Kristen Hollery and D'Arcy Morris-Poultney, together with Principal Jane Gourley, articulated their concerns for both school locations, primarily for student safety and equally to ensure the highest quality of education; and

Whereas we hope to resolve these concerns in partnership with the Halifax Regional School Board;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of the House of Assembly commend the SAC for John W. Macleod and Fleming Tower for their dedication to improving the education experience of students in Halifax Armdale.

**RESOLUTION NO. 1596**

By: Hon. Lena Diab (Justice)

I hereby give notice that on a future day I shall move the adoption of the following resolution:

Whereas I had the pleasure of attending the 5th Annual International Business Tradeshow at the World Trade and Convention Centre on April 11, 2015, to observe over 90 business booths, a multicultural food court, and live entertainment on stage; and

Whereas the International Business Tradeshow is an annual event, founded by Nikki Jafari, that was designed to allow people the opportunity to make new business connections, while learning about our diverse international business culture in Nova Scotia; and

Whereas the event recognized the contribution of major sponsors and supporters, particularly: Civic Homes, CRESCO, TD Bank, White Production, and City Mazda;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly commend Nikki Jafari on launching the International Business Tradeshow and wish the organizers, volunteers, and participants best of luck and continued success.

**RESOLUTION NO. 1597**

By: Hon. Lena Diab (Justice)

I hereby give notice that on a future day I shall move the adoption of the following resolution:

Whereas Our Lady of Lebanon Parish will be hosting their 9<sup>th</sup> annual Lebanese Cedar Festival on June 4,5,6, and 7, 2015; and

Whereas the culture and traditions of Lebanon are as ancient and run as deep as the roots of the famous Cedars; and

Whereas the Cedar Festival showcases the Lebanese culture as part of Canada's multicultural mosaic by sharing the best of Lebanese and Canadian culture for a weekend of traditional food, music, dancing, and fun;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of the House of Assembly congratulate the members of Our Lady of Lebanon Parish and the over 250 festival volunteers and wish them many years of success.

**RESOLUTION NO. 1598**

By: Hon. Lena Diab (Justice)

I hereby give notice that on a future day I shall move the adoption of the following resolution:

Whereas Patrick J. Salah is a gifted organist and Bachelor of Music graduate at Dalhousie University's Fountain School of Performing Arts; and

Whereas Patrick held his graduation performance recital on April 24, 2015, at Saint Mary's Cathedral Basilica; and

Whereas Patrick's family and many friends gathered to listen to his musical performance, which filled the audience's ears and souls with heavenly sounds and joy;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of the House of Assembly congratulate Patrick J. Salah on his recital and his graduation and wish him continued success in the future.

**RESOLUTION NO. 1599**

By: Hon. Lena Diab (Justice)

I hereby give notice that on a future day I shall move the adoption of the following resolution:

Whereas Jennifer Marie Arab and Patrick Robyn Campeau will celebrate their marriage on September 6, 2015; and

Whereas their family and friends look forward to seeing them commit their relationship publicly, officially, and permanently at Our Lady of Lebanon Church in Halifax; and

Whereas Jennifer and Patrick are beginning a new chapter in their lives together;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of the House of Assembly congratulate the couple on their engagement and wish them a marriage marked by many healthy and happy years.

**RESOLUTION NO. 1600**

By: Hon. Lena Diab (Justice)

I hereby give notice that on a future day I shall move the adoption of the following resolution:

Whereas George Chedrawy celebrates his First Holy Communion on Saturday, May 2, 2015, at Our Lady of Lebanon Parish; and

Whereas George has dedicated long hours with the help of his parents, Anthony and Zeina Chedrawy, and his teachers, and attended religious classes every Saturday morning; and

Whereas George will accept the bread and wine as the body and blood of Jesus Christ and continue in the tradition of spreading love and compassion;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of the House of Assembly congratulate George Chedrawy on his First Holy Communion and wish him continued success in the future.

**RESOLUTION NO. 1601**

By: Hon. Lena Diab (Justice)

I hereby give notice that on a future day I shall move the adoption of the following resolution:

Whereas Angelina Renée Metlej celebrates her First Holy Communion on Saturday, May 2, 2015, at Our Lady of Lebanon Parish; and

Whereas Angelina has dedicated long hours with the help of her parents, Peter and Tanya Metlej, and teachers, and attended religious classes every Saturday morning; and

Whereas Angelina will accept the bread and wine as the body and blood of Jesus Christ and continue in the tradition of spreading love and compassion;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of the House of Assembly congratulate Angelina Renée Metlej on her First Holy Communion and wish her continued success in the future.

**RESOLUTION NO. 1602**

By: Hon. Lena Diab (Justice)

I hereby give notice that on a future day I shall move the adoption of the following resolution:

Whereas Alexandre Laba celebrates his First Holy Communion on Saturday, May 2, 2015, at Our Lady of Lebanon Parish; and

Whereas Alexandre has dedicated long hours with the help of his parents, Peter and Rita Laba, and his teachers, and attended religious classes every Saturday morning; and

Whereas Alexandre will accept the bread and wine as the Body and blood of Jesus Christ and continue in the tradition of spreading love and compassion;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of the House of Assembly congratulate Alexandre Laba on his First Holy Communion and wish him continued success in the future.

**RESOLUTION NO. 1603**

By: Hon. Lena Diab (Justice)

I hereby give notice that on a future day I shall move the adoption of the following resolution:

Whereas Dominic Boutros Daaboul celebrates his First Holy Communion on Saturday, May 2, 2015, at Our Lady of Lebanon Parish; and

Whereas Dominic has dedicated long hours with the help of his parents, Boutros and Rita Daaboul, and his teachers, and attended religious classes every Saturday morning; and

Whereas Dominic will accept the bread and wine as the Body and blood of Jesus Christ and continue in the tradition of spreading love and compassion;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of the House of Assembly congratulate Dominic Boutros Daaboul on his First Holy Communion and wish him continued success in the future.

**RESOLUTION NO. 1604**

By: Hon. Lena Diab (Justice)

I hereby give notice that on a future day I shall move the adoption of the following resolution:

Whereas Miguel Toni Bou Nassif celebrates his First Holy Communion on Saturday, May 2, 2015, at Our Lady of Lebanon Parish; and

Whereas Miguel has dedicated long hours with the help of his parents, Toni and Nancy Bou Nassif, and his teachers, and attended religious classes every Saturday morning; and

Whereas Miguel will accept the bread and wine as the Body and blood of Jesus Christ and continue in the tradition of spreading love and compassion;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of the House of Assembly congratulate Miguel Toni Bou Nassif on his First Holy Communion and wish him continued success in the future.