

**Nova Scotia Provincial Council
Catholic Women's League of Canada
Legislation Annual Report for 2018**

I received annual reports from both Dioceses, with 22 out of 73 councils reporting on Legislation for the Province in 2018. The Antigonish Diocese had 13 out of 40 councils reporting which is 33% of parish councils sending in reports – with only 7 or roughly 50% of these councils reporting having chairpersons for this standing committee. The Halifax/Yarmouth diocese had 9 out of 33 councils reporting, 27%, and 8, almost 90% of councils, reported having chairpersons.

Most of the Legislation Chairs reported keeping in touch with all levels of government and knowing the identity of their elected representatives on all levels of government. They receive information through mailings and public forums. Two councils in the Antigonish Diocese reported attending a mental health forum presented by Dr. Stan Kutcher.

A few of the councils indicated that they use the Hansard, which is a printed record of proceedings for the provincial and federal government. With 22 out of 73 councils reporting, this indicates that only 30% of the councils in Nova Scotia are discussing or acting on federal and provincial bills. Most councils reported not being aware of or having little knowledge of: Bill **C-243**, An Act Respecting the Development of a National Maternity Assistance Program Strategy and Bill **C-211** An Act Respecting a Federal Framework on Post Traumatic Stress Disorder. Both Dioceses reported either action on, or discussions were held on, the following bills: **S-5** An Act to Amend the Tobacco Act and the Non-Smoker's Health Act, **S-228** An Act to Amend the Food and Drug Act (Prohibiting Food and Beverage Marketing), **C-404** An Act to Amend the Assisted Reproductive Act, **C-38** An Act to Amend the Criminal Code (Exploitation and Trafficking in Persons), **C-277** An Act Providing for the Development of a Framework on Palliative Care in Canada, **S-240** An Act to Amend the Criminal Code and the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act (Trafficking in Human Organs). 32% of councils reported not being aware of the Act **S-240**. The Halifax/Yarmouth chairperson wondered if the low response to this was due to the possibility of it not being highlighted in a communique.

Councils who submitted legislation reports indicated their participation and actions towards National Resolution **2018.03** Legislate Designation of Hospice/Palliative Care Services in Facilities to Exclude Medical Assistance in Dying and Resolution **2017.03** Zero-Rated Status Under the Goods and Services Tax Provisions of the Excise Tax Act for Child Safety Products.

Antigonish Diocese reported Resolution **2017.04** Protection from Coercion of Conscience for Healthcare Professionals was given a high percentage of attention. Also, one of their councils reported that they are monitoring and acting on grants given only to those whose workers are not Pro-Life. In the Halifax/Yarmouth Diocese, councils were also interested in other legislation at both levels of government including: changes to minimum wage, a Provincial Government Incentive Program (encouraging Doctors to accept patients from a provincial wait list with a one time bonus per patient) and continued interest in the Cannabis legislation.

As Legislation Chairperson, I participated in a Provincial and Diocesan Retreat held in Halifax, September 7th & 8th 2018. At this retreat we talked about our roles as leaders, conflict resolution, team problem solving, parliamentary procedure, communication, the art of a good report and listened to a presentation on the National Strategic Planning Plan. It was a great learning session and a time to meet members on both levels of our councils.

I have sent out 2 communiques since assuming this chair. In my first communique, I spoke about Resolution **2018.03** and encouraged members to carry out the action plans. I also spoke a bit about myself and to contact me at any time if needed. In my second communique, I addressed our new theme “*Care For Our Common Home*” and encouraged members to read “The League Magazine” where National President Anne-Marie Gorman gives ideas on how we can apply the theme in our own lives. Another article of interest in “The League Magazine” I would like to share is from our National Legislation Chair, Betty Colaneri, entitled “*Coming to Fruition.*” She talks about Legislation being compared to a book. There are 6 chapters to the story and the final chapter is the legislation. We may not like the story line or how it ends but it is very important that we are aware of how the story impacts our lives.

I was eager to take on the chair of Legislation and challenge myself to learn as much as I can as I have never participated in this committee before. It is certainly eye opening as to the many ways we can act upon Legislation and have our voices be heard. Thank you to both Diocesan counterparts, Patty Dorrian and Wanda Bruckschwaiger, for spreading the word of Legislation to the councils and for your reports.

It is challenging when we see the low number of reporting councils. Even though the numbers were lower than 2017, they are still up over 2016. So don't give up or be discouraged. We are doing great work! We need to continually spread the good news and stay positive. **Together We Can Make A Difference.**

Respectfully submitted,
Mary ten Brinke
Nova Scotia Provincial Legislation Chair