



ONTARIO PROVINCIAL COUNCIL
LEGISLATION STANDING COMMITTEE



ONE HEART, ONE VOICE, ONE MISSION

DIRECTIVE # 3

Pages:2 + Attachments: 1

January 20, 2016

To: Diocesan Legislation Standing Committee Chairpersons
From: Carol Richer, Ontario Provincial Council Legislation Standing Committee Chairperson
cc: Diocesan Presidents, Provincial Officers, Provincial Legislation Sub-committee member, and National Legislation Standing Committee Chairperson

"Do your little bit of good where you are; it is those little bits of good put together that overwhelm the world." (Desmond Tutu)

Best wishes to all of you for a blessed, happy and fulfilling New Year.

A quick update on some of the Provincial Bills which were mentioned in Directive #2

Bill 66 - Great Lakes Protection Act, 2015 -- *received Royal Assent on November 3, 2015*

Bill 75 - Microbead Elimination and Monitoring Act, 2015 - *Current status -- Consideration of a Bill by Standing Committee on Financial and Economic Affairs (Resolution ON.15.01 and National Resolution 2015.01)*

Bill 95 - Improving Mental Health and Addictions Services in Ontario Act, 2015 (*Resolution ON.13.01*) *Referred to Standing Committee on Justice Policy*

Bill 132 - Sexual Violence and Harassment Action Plan Act (Supporting Survivors and Challenging Sexual Violence and Harassment) 2015, *sent to Standing Committee on Social Policy for consideration as a Bill, January 19, 2016.*

I have attached a list of Provincial Bills that we should be watching. For full details re the Bills search Legislative Assembly of Ontario, click on Bills & Lawmaking, then click on the Bill #. Let your MPP know that you are interested in these Bills, in person or by letter, and let your views be known.

Federally, the Supreme Court has granted an extension of 4 months for the government to craft federal assisted-death laws. It is clear that both the federal government and the provinces will have to work quickly and collaboratively to meet this deadline. Ultimately, we all have a stake in the laws that will be enacted, laws that will certainly impact on our society and our future.

Palliative care is a long-neglected component of our health-care system. The League has long recognized the need for palliative care services to be designated as an essential service, fully funded, easily accessible, and readily available to all. We currently have one provincial (ON.09.06) and two national resolutions (1998.05 and 2007.03) relating to palliative care which can and should form the basis for a major

effort on our part to make our views and concerns known to those who will be developing the legislation which will govern assistance in dying.

In her letter to Parish Council Presidents (December 8, 2015), National President Barbara Dowding introduced the sub-theme for the Year of Mercy, ***One Heart, One Voice, One Mission -- Palliative and Hospice Care***. In light of the Supreme Court ruling, the importance of lobbying for better, more readily available and accessible Palliative and Hospice Care has taken on a new urgency.

As Maureen McTeer, adjunct professor of law, science and public policy at the University of Ottawa wrote recently, "This is one of the greatest legal and policy matters of our generation. It deserves to be discussed and debated at length by all Canadians." She further stated that "the issue of assistance in dying is not a stand-alone challenge. The government should fund comprehensive palliative care to meet the needs of the terminally ill and very sick patients. As they discuss and decide these issues, legislators will find the many recommendations in the Carstairs* final report on death and dying to be most helpful. This decades-old, but still very relevant Senate report clearly sets out steps that should be taken by government to ensure a seamless, well-funded and pan-Canadian system of palliative and end-of-life care." (*Senator Sharon Carstairs)

If ever there was a time for the League to mount an intensive letter writing campaign urging immediate improvements in palliative and hospice care, this is it! This is an issue that will involve both federal and provincial legislation, so letters should be sent to both MP's and MPP's. (*Sample letters will soon be available on the provincial website. Watch for them, and use them to formulate your own letters.*)

And don't stop at letters call the constituency office, ask to speak to the MP or MPP... leave a message and ask to be called back. Let them know that Palliative and Hospice Care has to be at the top of any political agenda.

Our '*little bits of good put together*' certainly have the potential to overwhelm the world!

Please feel free to contact me at any time with questions, concerns, suggestions, etc. I would love to hear from you!

May Our Lady of Good Counsel guide you as you continue your work for the League.

Blessings to all,

Carol

