

SOCIAL JUSTICE

From the 2024 October Newsletter

OPC Social and Economic Justice Team

The members of the [OPC Social and Economic Justice Team](#) are Betsy Currier, Life Member, Sault Ste. Marie Diocese, Paddy Fitzgerald Nolan, Life Member, Peterborough Diocese and Hilarion Mitchell, Life Member, Social Justice Chair. Betsy will be responsible for legislation, Paddy social justice issues and Hilarion, resolutions.



**Betsy Currier, Life Member,
Sault Ste. Marie Diocese**

What is Legislation and What is its Purpose?

Legislation refers to written laws, often referred to as Acts or statutes. The main purpose is to transform policies relating to issues into legally defined rights and obligations, and to present measures to ensure the observance of such rights and obligations.

Then What Happens?

A member of parliament must bring forward an issue as a Bill.

Bills must pass through three [stages](#), called "readings" in the House to become a new law or to change an existing one.

To become law, the bill must be approved by both the House of Commons and the Senate, and by the Governor General of Canada (the Crown). Bills are discussed by members of both Houses during what is formally known as First Reading, Second Reading and Third Reading, and are also submitted to a Parliamentary Committee for review. The final stage of the enactment of a bill is when it receives Royal Assent. An Act has the force of law upon Royal Assent, unless it is provided in the Act that it will come into force on a fixed date.

How does the League get involved?

Our work begins when the League passes a resolution. Once adopted (usually after months/years of research), resolutions remain words on a paper unless we follow up to ensure that government enacts laws or makes changes that we request. Action plans are found at the bottom of each of our adopted resolution(s) posted on the provincial and national websites. Our task is to review the Action Plans and do the necessary follow up work to give life to the resolution(s).

Get moving...

Part of the action plan may be to:

- bring the resolution, or even our concerns to the government
- lobby government
- call your member of parliament or visit his/her constituency office
- do a letter writing or postcard campaign
- write a letter to the prime minister or your premier, your minister of parliament, the minister involved in the issue - names and addresses (e-mail or postal) can be found on the government websites. Remember, if you choose to use Canada Post to Ottawa or Queen's Park, postage is not necessary.

This is how we make a difference!

Act on our recent resolution ON.24.01 Elimination of the Mature Minor Doctrine in Mental Health.

Action Plan

1. Write letters to the premier of Ontario, the minister of health, and your MPP to enact legislation to include parents/legal guardians in the assessment, development, modification, and ongoing implementation of mental health treatment plans for children under the age of 16, thereby eliminating the practice of mature minor doctrine.
2. Find out more about your local agencies who assist with mental health and ask how you or your council can assist them in their mission.
3. Invite a guest speaker to speak on how to better support individuals struggling with mental health or illness.
4. Search the patron saints of mental health and organize a novena or spiritual development exercise to pray for the individuals and their families who struggle with mental health.



Paddy Fitzgerald Nolan, Life Member, Peterborough Diocese

My focus during the two-year term will be on issues such as human trafficking, homelessness, domestic violence, discrimination, prison reform and mental health.

October 10th is World Day Against the Death Penalty, World Homeless Day and World Mental Health Day.

Canada abolished the Death Penalty in 1976, removing it from the Canadian Criminal Code.

- Three books recommend for World Homeless Day.
 - 1) No Home in a Homeland ~ Homelessness in the Canadian North by Julia Christensen.
 - 2) A Knapsack Full of Dreams by Cathy Crowe
 - 3) All Our Sisters ~ Stories of Homeless Women in Canada, by Susan Scott
- World Mental Health Day
 - 1) Raise awareness of the stigmas surrounding mental illness
 - 2) Promoting mental health
 - 3) Open the conversation

