

MLA REMUNERATION REVIEW PANEL REPORT

*Report of Panel appointed by the Speaker of the
Nova Scotia House of Assembly on December 30, 2013*

Chair: Roy Salmon, FCA

Members: Janet Hazelton, Bsc N.R.N. M.P.A.
John Merrick, Q.C.

April 9, 2014

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Honourable Kevin S. Murphy
Speaker of the Nova Scotia House of Assembly
Province House – 1726 Hollis Street
Halifax, Nova Scotia

Honourable Speaker Murphy,

We have the honour to present herewith our report and recommendations regarding the salaries, retiring allowances, pension, travel, constituency expenses and all other allowable expenses and other payments made to Members of the Nova Scotia House of Assembly.

Over the past three months we have reviewed volumes of research material and reports, heard from members of the public, met with a current MLA and the Director of Administration from the Speaker's Office as well as other people to canvas the issues relative to our wide-ranging mandate. We thank Steven R. Wolff and John Ross of the Nova Scotia Pension Services Corporation, Doug Moodie, Solicitor for the Corporation, Doug Brake, Actuary and Pension Consultant at Mercer (Canada) Limited, Calvin Jordan, CEO, Health Association of Nova Scotia and Gordon D. Hebb, Q.C., Chief Legislative Counsel for meeting with us and answering our numerous questions.

We heard from many that adjustments must be made to allowances paid to MLAs and we have made adjustments and provided clarification where we found it necessary to do so as a result of our review.

Members of the public also expressed concern to the effect that the MLA pension was too generous. On this topic we reviewed the 2011 MLA Pension Review Report produced by the Panel chaired by the Honourable David W. Gruchy, Q.C. We agree with the findings of that Panel when they concluded that the job of an MLA is unique and tenure is not a certainty.

We also found that the "service" of MLAs upon which their pension is calculated must be fair and reasonable and brought in line with the public service pension plan and we have made recommendations in that regard.

Further adjustments are nonetheless in our opinion required and recommendations for changes are contained herein.

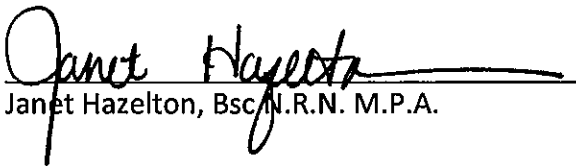
We thank Neil Ferguson, Chief Clerk and Annette M. Boucher, Q.C., Assistant Clerk, for their work in supporting our Panel.

We have accomplished our mandate and the task assigned to us. We hope that our recommendations will be of assistance and we thank you for the honour it has been for us to serve our Province in this limited manner.

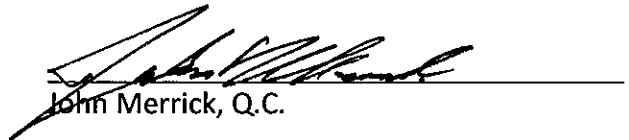
Respectfully submitted,



Roy Salmon, FCA



Janet Hazelton, Bsc N.R.N. M.P.A.



John Merrick, Q.C.

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INTRODUCTION

On December 30, 2013, the Speaker of the House of Assembly appointed a three-member review panel to carry out an inquiry and make recommendations respecting all allowances, reimbursements, allowable expenses or other payments made to Members of the House of Assembly pursuant to the *House of Assembly Management Commission Act*, including eligibility to receive payments under the *House of Assembly Act* and all retiring allowances payable to Members of the House of Assembly pursuant to the *Members' Retiring Allowances Act*.

The press release regarding the appointment of the Panel can be found at Appendix A to this report. The terms of reference for the Panel are set out at Section 45A of the *House of Assembly Act* which can be found at Appendix B of this report.

This report sets out forty-three recommendations regrouped under eight different topic headings. The report is a detailed and complete review by the Panel of the issues identified in Section 45A of the *House of Assembly Act*.

Only the areas identified in the recommendations require attention and/or changes, all other aspects of MLA salary, allowances, pension and related payments, do not require any changes and are therefore not set out in the report.

The Panel requests that all necessary legislative and regulatory changes be made to give effect to the recommendations as contained in this report.

REVIEW PROCESS

The Panel members attended an introductory meeting with the Speaker, the Chief Clerk of the House, Mr. Neil Ferguson and the Assistant Clerk, Ms. Annette M. Boucher, Q.C. The Speaker outlined the statutory mandate of the Panel and the resources that would be available to assist the Panel. The Chief Clerk and Assistant Clerk provided background material and described how previous reviews had been conducted.

The Panel considered the following documentation as part of its review:

- Nova Scotia MLA Pension Review Report dated November 3, 2011;
- Report of the Commission of Inquiry on the Remuneration of Elected Provincial Officials, September 2006;
- Report of the Commission of Inquiry on the Remuneration of Elected Provincial Officials, December 2003;
- Report of the MLA compensation review in Alberta, May 2012;
- Charts setting out current salaries paid to MLAs and a historical outline of salaries from 1980 to present;
- Charts setting out salaries paid to elected provincial members in other provinces and jurisdictions;
- Charts detailing expense allowances currently paid to MLAs and a historic outline of expenses from 1982 to present;
- Charts setting out accommodation options for MLAs in other jurisdictions;
- Nova Scotia House of Assembly Members' Manual - Compensation, Expenses and Constituency Administration;
- Report of the Auditor General of Nova Scotia to the House of Assembly, August 2013;
- Nova Scotia Pension Services Corporation website; and
- Court decisions.

The Panel determined that input through public meetings and MLA meetings were both necessary and appropriate. Accordingly a press release was issued on January 24, 2014 and is found at Appendix C to this report inviting interested persons to meet with the Panel or provide written submissions. Public meetings were scheduled for February 12, 2014 and written submissions were accepted until February 17, 2014.

The Panel received eighty-two emailed submissions and seven regular mail submissions which are found at Appendix D to this report. Three individuals requested the opportunity to address the Panel in person by booking time before the Panel. The list of presenters, their written presentations and the transcript of their presentations are attached at Appendix E to this report.

The Chair of the Panel wrote to the caucus chairs inviting them to meet with the Panel, however, all declined to do so. As a result of an inquiry to the Speaker from an MLA, a general invitation to all MLAs to meet privately with the Panel was extended. One MLA requested and was granted an opportunity to meet privately with the Panel.

The Panel met with Steven R. Wolff, John Ross and Douglas Moodie of the Nova Scotia Pension Services Corporation to gain a better understanding of the MLA pension plan. This information was supplemented by Doug Brake, an Actuary and Pension Consultant at Mercer (Canada) Limited, who is responsible for the financial management of the MLA pension plan and Calvin Jordan, Chief Executive Officer of the Health Association of Nova Scotia. The Panel also met with Gordon D. Hebb, Q.C., Chief Legislative Counsel to discuss legislative and regulatory changes to give effect to the Panel's recommendations.

The Panel also reviewed relevant legislation in Nova Scotia affecting MLA salaries, pensions and allowances:

- *House of Assembly Act*, R.S. 1989 (1992 Supplement), c. 1
- *House of Assembly Management Commission Act*, S.N.S. 2010, c. 5
- *House of Assembly Management Commission Regulations*
- *Members' Retiring Allowances Act*, R.S.N.S. 1989, c. 282
- *Public Service Superannuation Act*, S.N.S. 2012, c. 4, Sch. B

THE DAY-TO-DAY REALITY OF AN MLA ELECTED TO THE NOVA SCOTIA HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY

The Panel found the report of the November 2011 MLA Pension Review chaired by the Honourable David W. Gruchy, Q.C., so compelling and accurate on this topic that the excerpts below are reproduced directly from the report:

"[18] The MLA's job description, as often portrayed in the media and public dialogue, is not always reflective of the actual work carried out by the individual MLAs. Public perception was described by Commissioner Arthur R. Donahoe, Q.C., and stated in his 2003 report:

"We live in a time when public regard for elected persons is very low."¹

A few years later, in 2006, the Nova Scotia Commission of Inquiry observed in its report:

"...few members of the public are fully aware of the demands on an MLA's time and abilities unless they have had direct interaction with their own MLA."²

...

[20] So then how does one set forth the "job description" of an MLA? There are really two "areas" of MLA work. The first is constituency work where the MLA is "on call" for their constituents twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week, whether the constituents supported them or not. The second is legislative work. Unfortunately this description does not make it easier to define the nature of the MLA workload. Much of that is determined by the MLA's personal contributions, the physical size of his or her constituency, travels back and forth to Halifax³ and the role the Member takes on in the House of Assembly.

[21] In recent years, sittings of the House of Assembly have amounted to several months per year. Many of the sitting days involve evening sittings.

¹ NS Commission of Inquiry on the Remuneration of Elected Provincial Officials, Report, December 2003, page 6

² NS Commission of Inquiry on the Remuneration of Elected Provincial Officials, Report, September 2006, page 7

³ NS Commission of Inquiry on the Remuneration of Elected Provincial Officials, Report, September 2006, page 11

“All sessions require that MLAs are not just in attendance but have done sufficient homework that they are informed on all the issues under discussion. This is particularly true with regard to the House Committee work: every MLA who is not a member of Cabinet belongs to at least one legislative committee, ranging from public accounts to health to community services, post-secondary education and transportation. These can take considerable time. An MLA must reflect his or her constituents’ concerns in legislative discussions, and also reflect back to the public the reason he or she supports or challenges the legislation. In attending the Legislature, many MLAs from around the province spend long periods of time away from home, frequently missing important family occasions.

It is perhaps less well understood that legislative work is only a small portion of what MLAs do. MLAs are expected – and rightly so – to serve the interests of their constituents: those who voted for them and those who did not. MLAs must anticipate demands for new roads or schools or environmental controls and work with government departments to produce results. They are expected – and rightly so – to attend Rotary lunches, charity auctions (and bid on the merchandise!), school Christmas concerts, supermarket openings and other ribbon cuttings, to be present at the funerals and weddings of people they may hardly know and to listen to demands, rational or irrational, by constituents whose grant applications have been rejected. They are usually double or even triple booked for most weekends in the constituency, having driven for several hours to return from Halifax late on Friday.”⁴

[22] *As pointed out by Commissioner Lorne O. Clarke, in his November 30, 1998 report, an MLA cannot have a second occupation.⁵ This was further discussed in 2006:*

“The workload of an MLA is too heavy and unpredictable to add another significant occupation. In addition, the potential for conflict of interest is very high and poses a degree of risk that most MLAs would be unwilling

⁴ NS Commission of Inquiry on the Remuneration of Elected Provincial Officials, Report, September 2006, page 7

⁵ NS Commission of Inquiry on the Remuneration of Elected Provincial Officials, Report, November 30, 1998, page 3

to accept. This is particularly, but not exclusively, applicable to Cabinet Ministers.”⁶

[23] The Premier, Cabinet Ministers, the Speaker and Deputy Speaker have added job responsibilities stacked upon the MLA role, which together constitute nothing short of a heavy workload with great responsibility that cannot be readily compared to any occupation in the private sector.⁷

[24] Simply put, this is not the regular employment environment of other citizens.

“The demands and pressures on MLAs are quite different from those experienced in most forms of employment.”⁸

[25] The retired and current MLAs who met the Review Panel indicated that their reason for becoming elected members was their desire to get involved and to try to improve things for Nova Scotians. They run for elected office of their own free will, but few know the true extent of the demands that will be placed on them and their families. By extension, the life of the politician has an impact on the family.

“What is more difficult is the toll that political life takes on families. Children are occasionally jeered in the schoolyard over something their MLA parent said or did. If their mother chooses to run for office, they are seen as orphans no matter how well adjusted the family. Public criticism is difficult enough for the MLA personally, but it is doubly difficult for their families, who can only watch, with no means to defend themselves.”⁹

[26] So, what types of people become MLAs? In 2003, Commissioner Donahoe prepared a chart of occupations of MLAs prior to the most recent election. That chart disclosed that there were eleven business people, eight teachers/educators, seven lawyers, three media persons, two accountants, two police officers, two municipal governments (elected officials), and one of each of the following

⁶ NS Commission of Inquiry on the Remuneration of Elected Provincial Officials, Report, September 2006, page 11

⁷ NS Commission of Inquiry on the Remuneration of Elected Provincial Officials, Report, December 1, 2000, page 26

⁸ NS Commission on Remuneration of Elected Provincial Officials, Report, December 1, 2000, page 6

⁹ NS Commission of Inquiry on the Remuneration of Elected Provincial Officials, Report, September 2006, page 7

occupations: school board (elected official), real estate agent, land surveyor, office manager, cartographer, farmer, fisherman, steel worker, doctor, paramedic, social worker, safety engineer, insurance broker, religious minister, technician, pilot and editor/researcher. In analyzing these data he stated:

“It should be noted that persons who were formerly engaged in business, the teaching profession, and the legal profession make up 50% of the membership. It should also be noted that 13 members had experience as elected representatives at the municipal level (as well as another occupation) before being elected provincially.”¹⁰

[27] An informal survey conducted by the Review Panel disclosed that in September 2011, although the occupations have changed slightly, the percentages referred to by Commissioner Donahoe remain roughly the same regarding the composition of the House of Assembly and its fifty-two elected members.”

MLA pensions were referenced in almost every written submission made to the Panel in 2014 that are found in Appendix D to this report. For the Panel a key component of the MLA pension plan is the average length of “service” required to access the pension and the changes required to bring the vesting period for the MLA pension in line with the Public Service Superannuation Plan.

The present Panel noted with great interest that the 2011 MLA Pension Review Panel justified their recommendations regarding the length of time required for the MLA pension to vest in closing the gap with the Public Service Superannuation Plan and once again the Panel felt it was necessary to reproduce excerpts from the November 2011 MLA Pension Review Report setting out the unique situation retiring MLAs find themselves in.

“[34] When most people retire it is following a long multi-year working life. A person normally has some control regarding the number of years worked and for which employer. However, that is not the case for an MLA. The MLA does not know how long his or her career as an elected politician will last. Commissioner Clarke wrote in 1998:

“The MLA is not assured of a long period of employment as is the case in most occupations. There is no career job security. The only guarantee of employment is until the next election. Continuation of employment is

¹⁰ NS Commission on Remuneration of Elected Provincial Officials, Report, December 2003, page 13

uncertain: it depends upon the will of the Electors. Whatever the length of service, the MLA who resigns or fails to be re-elected is usually confronted with lost job opportunities or at best must re-group and seek new employment. Some are able to return to his or her former professional or business occupation. They are few in number and are among the fortunate. The same case cannot be made for all members. This is one of the hazards of the occupation – the longer the lapse, the more difficult and costly is the return to private life from public service.”¹¹ These same themes were repeated in 2006, when it was stated: “For obvious reasons there is no job security for an MLA: an election can bring a promising political career to an abrupt end. The transition to the private sector can be difficult, particularly for those MLAs whose party is out of power.”¹²

[35] *The issue of job security is real for an MLA no matter how good a job he or she does or has done. In the 2007 Newfoundland study, it was stated:*

“It could occur that an MHA who is performing adequately, or perhaps even above average, is not re-elected due to a change in the mood of the electorate or the “time to change” syndrome. On the other hand, it is unlikely that a public servant, teacher or a member of the uniformed services would be dismissed in such circumstances.”¹³

[36] *Job insecurity every four years is not something most people worry about – however, it is a fact of life for elected Members.*

“While it is a fact that other public employees also face the possibility of dismissal from their jobs, the experience has been that most enjoy a long tenure with their employer leading up to their retirement. This lack of long term job security raises the question as to what level of pension accrual rate should be fairly applied to account for this fact.”¹⁴

¹¹ NS Commission of Inquiry on the Remuneration of Elected Provincial Officials, Report, November 30, 1998, page 6

¹² NS Commission of Inquiry on the Remuneration of Elected Provincial Officials, Report, September 2006, page 7

¹³ Chief Justice J. Derek Green: “Rebuilding Confidence: The Report of the Review Commission on Constituency Allowances and Related Matters,” Newfoundland, April 30, 2007, page 11-5

¹⁴ Newfoundland and Labrador House of Assembly Review of: MHA Salaries, Allowances, Severance Payments and Pensions, October 2009, page 24

[37] *An MLA effectively interrupts his or her career to become an elected Member. Several reports considered by the Review Panel along with submissions made by current and retired MLAs focus on the fact that the career interruption of MLAs is usually at a point in their lives when their careers are at their peak. Commissioner Donahoe stated:*

“There must be adequate remuneration to allow a person to take a period out of a career or away from a business, at a time in their lives when their earning potential is at its highest, be able to maintain a standard of living at a level equivalent to that which one similarly qualified would maintain in the private sector, and be penalized as little as possible on return to private life.”¹⁵

¹⁵ NS Commission of Inquiry on the Remuneration of Elected Provincial Officials, Report, December 2003, page 6

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Panel's recommendations and the factors considered in arriving at the recommendations are set out below. The recommendations are organized under subject headings.

1. INDEMNITY OF MEMBERS

- 1.1 The current base MLA annual indemnity, the additional annual indemnities paid to those Members carrying out the duties of Premier, Member of the Executive Council having charge of a department, Speaker, Deputy Speaker, Leader of the Opposition and Leader of a Recognized Party and the annual payments made to Members carrying out the duties of committee chair, committee vice-chair, House Leader, Deputy House Leader, whip and caucus chair, are to remain unchanged.**

All Members elected to the House of Assembly are currently paid a base salary of \$89,234.00 per year.

In keeping with Section 45A of the *House of Assembly Act*,¹⁶ after each General Election the Speaker appoints three persons to make an inquiry and to make a report respecting the annual indemnities paid to the elected Members of the House of Assembly. The last review was conducted in 2006.

In 2006, the Commission of Inquiry on the Remuneration of Elected Provincial Officials¹⁷ chaired by the Honourable Barbara McDougall recommended that the base salary for Members be increased from the set \$65,556.00 to \$79,500.00. This recommendation was not implemented and the base salary remained unchanged at \$65,556.00.

Since 2007, in keeping with subsection 45A(7) of the *House of Assembly Act*, on January 1st yearly the amounts paid to Members increases by the same percentage increase provided to civil servants for the current fiscal year. Appendix F to this report is a chart showing the yearly indemnity for Members for the years 2006 to 2013.

Elected Members of the House of Assembly who are members of the Executive Council (Ministers), the Premier, the Speaker, the Deputy Speaker, the Leader of the Opposition and

¹⁶ R.S. 1989 (1992 Supp.), c. 1

¹⁷ <http://0-fs01.cito.gov.ns.ca.legcat.gov.ns.ca/deposit/i10729811.pdf>

the Leader of a Recognized Party receive annual indemnities in addition to the base salary of \$89,234.00.

The current 2013 additional indemnities paid and total salaries are set out below:

Position	Additional Indemnity	Base Indemnity	Total Salary
Premier	\$112,791.00	\$89,234.00	\$202,025.00
Minister	\$49,046.00	\$89,234.00	\$138,280.00
Speaker	\$49,046.00	\$89,234.00	\$138,280.00
Leader of the Opposition	\$49,046.00	\$89,234.00	\$138,280.00
Deputy Speaker	\$24,523.00	\$89,234.00	\$113,757.00
Leader of Recognized Party	\$24,523.00	\$89,234.00	\$113,757.00

These additional indemnities were reviewed and some were set by the Commission of Inquiry on Remuneration in 2006. All have been increased yearly since 2007 as set out in the chart at Appendix G to this report.

Following the 2009 provincial election no remuneration review was undertaken as amendments made to the *House of Assembly Act* specifically prevented the review from taking place until after the 2013 election (see subsection 45A(8)).

Elected Members of the House of Assembly who have responsibilities such as Government House Leader, Opposition House Leader, House Leader of a Recognized Party, party whip, caucus chair, House committee chairs and vice chairs, are paid additional amounts to assume those roles. These payments are made in accordance with the *House of Assembly Management Commission Regulations* and are made in two installments after April 1st and after October 1st annually. Regulation 52 provides that the fixed amounts are increased on April 1st each year by the increase in the Consumer Price Index for Nova Scotia or the Core Consumer Price Index for Canada, whichever is lower, for the previous year. The Regulation was amended by the House of Assembly Management Commission at its meeting on April 27, 2011 to put in place the Commission's decision to not increase these amounts for the 2011-12 fiscal year (April 1, 2011 to March 31, 2012).

Appendix H to this report is a chart setting out these additional amounts paid to the elected Members assuming the roles from 2006 to 2013.

The Panel compared all indemnities and additional payments paid to the MLAs with those paid to elected persons in other Canadian jurisdictions all the while considering the specific profile of a Nova Scotia Member of the House of Assembly, as described in the November 3, 2011 Nova Scotia MLA Pension Review Report.¹⁸ Following that analysis the Panel concludes that the salaries and additional amounts paid to MLAs are in line with payments made to other provincial elected officials in Canada and are to remain unchanged.

The Panel finds that the current annual indemnities and payments paid to MLAs are adequate.

2. MLA PENSION PLAN

- 2.1 The current MLA Pension Plan eligibility criteria requiring a Member serve for at least five years during two or more General Assemblies is eliminated effective November 1, 2013 and is replaced with the eligibility criteria requiring a Member serve at least two years as an MLA.**
- 2.2 Effective the date of the next General Election, the retiring allowance earned under the MLA Pension Plan by an MLA or a former MLA who participates in and has contributed to the *Canada Pension Plan* is to be integrated with the pension benefits earned under the *Canada Pension Plan* and must be calculated as prescribed by the plan regulations.**
- 2.3 Effective the date of the next General Election, a survivor allowance payable under the MLA Pension Plan to a spousal, child or dependent survivor of an MLA or a former MLA who participated in and contributed to the *Canada Pension Plan* is to be integrated with the pension benefits earned under the *Canada Pension Plan* and must be calculated as prescribed by the plan regulations.**
- 2.4 For greater certainty, the changes set out in paragraphs 2.2 and 2.3 do not apply to retirement allowances and survivor allowances in pay on or before the date of the next General Election.**
- 2.5 For calculation purposes to implement paragraphs 2.2 and 2.3 an MLA who is not exempt from participation in the Canada Pension Plan is deemed to be entitled to commencement of a pension under the Canada Pension Plan at age sixty-five, regardless of whether the MLA applies for and receives a pension under the Canada Pension Plan at that time.**

¹⁸ Report of Panel appointed by Speaker on May 5, 2011, chaired by Honourable David W. Gruchy, Q.C., pages 11 to 15

2.6 The regulation making authority in the *Members' Retiring Allowances Act* must be expanded to include the authority to make regulations regarding the calculation of the integrated pension at recommendations 2.2 and 2.3.

Discussion regarding the MLA Pension Plan continues to capture the attention of people in Nova Scotia as was evidenced by almost every public submission made to the Panel as part of this review.

It became apparent to the Panel in reviewing the public submissions, which are found at Appendix D of this report, that there is an important misunderstanding regarding the years of service component of the MLA pension calculation. Currently, the starting eligibility point is that an MLA must be elected twice – that means in two General Elections – and must serve five years. All of the MLAs who were elected for a first time in the 2009 General Election and were defeated in the 2013 election are not eligible for an MLA pension because they have only served four years, therefore their contributions will be returned to them.

On average an MLA will hold office for seven to eight years and will be elected twice. Although as mentioned above, it is possible for a large number of MLAs to only be elected once and serve only four years. Assuming, for our example, that the MLA is a backbencher during the entire service of eight years and the three years highest average salary is \$91,000.00, the pension earned will be based on the following formula: $3.5\% \times 8 \text{ years} \times \$91,000.00 = \$25,480.00$. This annual pension amount only becomes payable to the Member at age 55, or at the choice of the Member, can go into pay at age 50, on a reduced amount.

Civil servants in Nova Scotia are entitled to a pension based on years of service once they have been employed for two years. However, it is clear that most civil servants are long term employees – generally, with some exceptions, civil servants “control” the length of their employment with the Province of Nova Scotia. Elected MLAs do not have the same ability. They cannot determine their length of service as our democratic political system places that determination in the hands of the electorate on Election Day.

The Panel is of the view, where possible, that MLAs should be treated in the same fashion as public servants. For this reason, the Panel confirms that the MLA pension plan will remain as it currently exists with two changes as set out below to better align the MLA plan with the Public Service Superannuation Plan.

The first change relates to the service time required to become eligible for a pension – this is often referred to as the time required for the pension to “vest.” Currently the MLA pension plan requires the MLA to be elected in two General Elections and have served five years. The Public Service Superannuation Plan for civil servants “vests” after two years of service. In 2011,

the MLA Pension Review chaired by the Honourable David W. Gruchy, Q.C., recommended that the MLA Pension Plan vest after two years – that means after two years of service, as is the case with the Public Service Superannuation Plan. The recommendation regarding the “vesting” period was not included in the legislative amendments made to implement the 2011 Report recommendations.

This Panel endorses and agrees with the 2011 Panel recommendation regarding the number of years an MLA must serve before being eligible to an MLA pension.

The Panel recommends that the present MLA Pension Plan eligibility criteria requiring a Member serve for at least five years during two or more General Assemblies be changed effective November 1, 2013 to an eligibility criteria requiring a Member serve at least two years as an MLA.

The second change relates to the non-combining or the “stacking” of the Canada Pension Plan (CPP) pension for MLAs over and above the MLA pension. Currently all CPP pension payments made to a retired MLA are in addition to the Member’s MLA retirement pension payment. This is very different from the Public Service Superannuation Plan – when payable the public servant pension is integrated with pension benefits earned under CPP. This means that for a public servant who retires before age 65 the superannuation pension includes a “bridging” payment based on calculations involving CPP and, at age 65, the public servant’s pension is recalculated to stop the “bridging” payment thereby reducing the pension and the CPP pension benefit goes into pay.

The Panel is of the view that the non-integration of the MLA pension plan with the Canada Pension Plan results in a too generous pension benefit for MLAs as compared to public servants and others and this result is greatly out of sync with most other public and private defined benefit pension plans in this country.

For this reason the Panel recommends the integration of the CPP pension with the MLA pension plan as is the case with the public service pension. The practical result is that the CPP will no longer be “stacked” or non-integrated to the MLA pension.

With regard to the effective date of the integration, the Panel recommends the date of the next General Election. This means that on and after the date of the next General Election all earned retiring allowances will be integrated with Canada Pension Plan. Practically speaking if an MLA has five years of service before the date of the next General Election, is re-elected in the next election and has four more years of service as an MLA from the date of the next General Election forward, the retiring allowance earned during the first five years of service will not be integrated with CPP, but the four subsequent years of service after the election will be integrated with CPP. When the pension goes into pay only the portion related to the four years

will be integrated with CPP. This also applies to survivor allowances. The precise pension payment calculations are to be made in accordance with regulations to be made under the *Members' Retiring Allowances Act*. In making these regulations consideration should be given to the calculation regulations made under the *Public Service Superannuation Act*.

With regard to MLA retirement allowances and survivor allowances in pay on or before the date of the next General Election, these payments will not be affected by the Panel's recommendations regarding integration. These specific "in pay" pensions will continue to be made unaffected by these recommendations. It is simply unfair to do otherwise.

The Panel is concerned about fairness in its treatment of persons in receipt of pensions and does not wish to take away a benefit in pay to these persons.

Finally, in keeping with the terms of the CPP integration set out in the Public Service Superannuation Plan, for calculation purposes an MLA is deemed to be entitled to commencement of a CPP pension at age 65 regardless of whether the MLA applies for and receives a CPP pension at that time.

3. COUNSELLING OR RETRAINING SERVICES

- 3.1 The timing of the MLA application to the Speaker and the Speaker's approval of retirement counselling, career counselling or career retraining services is to be changed from the date at which the transition allowance goes into pay to the date at which the MLA confirms to the Speaker, in writing, his or her decision not to seek re-election in the next upcoming election, whether the election date has been set or not.**
- 3.2 When an MLA is re-elected after having received retirement counselling, career counselling or career retraining services pursuant to the *House of Assembly Act*, the MLA must immediately reimburse the cost of the services to the Speaker's Office.**

The counselling or retraining services for MLAs who resign or are defeated in an election were put in place on the recommendation of the 2011 Panel reviewing MLA pensions.¹⁹ An MLA can only access these services when eligible to receive a transition allowance, that is when the Member resigns, a date that will be close in time to the election date. Even when the Member has made known well in advance the intention to resign, these services cannot be accessed

¹⁹ Nova Scotia MLA Pension Review Report, November 3, 2011 pages 31-32

until resignation. It was brought to the Panel's attention during this review that this timing is often too late to provide meaningful advance planning options for the retiring MLA. The current timing actually prevents, in some cases, a smooth transition. The Panel recommends that upon the MLA confirming in writing to the Speaker that he or she will not seek re-election in the next upcoming election, whether the election date has been set or not, the MLA is eligible for these services if they are approved by the Speaker.

As a result of changing the time when an MLA can access these services, the Panel wishes to ensure that an MLA can only access these services on a one-time basis. Therefore, should an MLA access the services and subsequently be re-elected to the House of Assembly at any time, either in the next election or during any future election, the amount paid for services for that Member is to be immediately reimbursed to the Speaker's Office.

For further clarity a Member can access services more than once due to several re-elections, however, services will only be paid once by the Speaker's Office as the MLA must reimburse any amounts paid for these services prior to each re-election, upon re-election.

4. OUTSIDE MEMBER

- 4.1 A definition of the term "ordinarily resident" is to be added to the *House of Assembly Act* and the *House of Assembly Management Commission Act*.**
- 4.2 For definition purposes the Panel directs that an MLA is ordinarily resident "at the principal place where the MLA is settled-in and maintains an ordinary mode of living with its accessories, relationships and conveniences and is where the Member lives as an inhabitant and not a visitor."**
- 4.3 The Panel directs that an MLA shall be ordinarily resident in only one place for the purposes of establishing whether the Member is an "outside" Member and entitled to certain expenses and allowances for the purposes of the *House of Assembly Act*, the *House of Assembly Management Commission Act* and the *House of Assembly Management Commission Regulations*.**
- 4.4 The Panel recommends that the House of Assembly Management Commission list in its Regulations the factors to be considered to determine MLA residency as defined in recommendation 4.2.**
- 4.5 The Panel further directs that a dispute resolution process to determine the MLA's residence be put in place for use, should a dispute arise between the Commission and an individual MLA because the MLA has two or more places that he or she considers to be his or her principal residence.**

4.6 The current definition of “outside member” in the *House of Assembly Act* is to be repealed and replaced with the following definition of “outside member”: “means a member of the House who is ordinarily resident within the meaning of the *House of Assembly Management Commission Act*, more than one hundred kilometres distant from the place where the House ordinarily sits.”

Many allowances and expenses are available to MLAs based on whether they are an outside Member. There are two elements for determining whether an MLA is an “outside Member”- firstly, the location of the MLA’s residence and secondly the distance between that residence and Province House. This very issue was the subject of the August 2013 Report of the Auditor General.²⁰

It is worth re-stating that the importance of the definition of “residency” is to determine whether an MLA can claim payment for allowances and expenses for their work as an MLA from public monies. For this reason, the Panel is of the view that the definition of residency for these purposes must be found in the legislation that governs the payment of these expenses.²¹ At present the definition of “residency” is anchored to the *Elections Act*²² and the Panel directs that this reference is to be removed.

The Auditor General noted that the determination of residency pursuant to the *Elections Act* can place the decision in the hands of an election officer. The election official would not be bound by factors established under the legislation governing the payment of MLA expenses, yet, the determination of the election official is binding for the purposes of determining eligibility to MLA expenses and allowances. There is, in the Panel’s view, a disconnect in this chain of events.

“This establishes ... residency within the meaning of the *Elections Act*. This in turn establishes ... residency for the purpose of eligibility to be classified as an outside member under 2(1)(e) of the *House of Assembly Act*, **irrespective of any other factors related to his residency.**” (Emphasis added)²³

²⁰ Report of the Auditor General to the Nova Scotia House of Assembly, Review of MLA Samson’s Entitlement to Benefits as an Outside member, August 2013

²¹ The *House of Assembly Act*, R.S. (1992 Supp.), c. 1; the *House of Assembly Management Commission Act*, Chapter 5 of the Acts of 2010 and the *House of Assembly Management Commission Regulations*

²² Section 40 of Chapter 5 of the Acts of 2011

²³ Report of the Auditor General, August 2013, page 17

The Panel concludes that the definition of “residency” is not to be linked to the *Elections Act* and directs the current definition in the *House of Assembly Act* be repealed.

The Panel also directs that for the purposes of eligibility to MLA expenses and allowances an MLA can only have one residence at one time for the purposes of the *House of Assembly Act*, the *House of Assembly Management Commission Act* and the *House of Assembly Management Commission Regulations*.

The challenge for the Panel was finding an appropriate definition for “residency.” Identifying the elements necessary to determine “residency” is very difficult as it is fact specific to each individual MLA. In fact, the Panel reviewed case law where the Supreme Court of Canada found it was impossible to give a precise and inclusive definition to the term.²⁴ Additionally, the Nova Scotia Court of Appeal found on its review of the law that many themes emerge when determining the “ordinary residence” of a person.²⁵ The reason for the various themes is due to the reality that in each case the analysis will consider the specific fact situation of the person for whom a determination of residency is required and each situation is different and unique.

The Auditor General, when faced with making the determination of an MLA’s place of residence, concluded that the MLA was living in two locations but was ordinarily resident where his family resided.²⁶ The presumption the Auditor General made was that an MLA resides with his family unless there exists compelling evidence to the contrary.²⁷

The Panel does not agree that an MLA can have two residences, rather for the purposes of establishing eligibility to expenses the Panel concludes that an MLA shall only have one residence. In determining “residency” for the purposes of concluding whether an MLA is an outside or a non-outside Member, consideration must be given to a variety of factors. The Panel recognizes that it is difficult to give a precise and inclusive definition and that latitude be given to consider as many factors as necessary when carrying out the analysis. However, the Panel wishes to give direction and guidance and recommends that in defining the term “ordinarily resident” there be a specific requirement that the MLA be an ordinary resident at: the principal place where the MLA is settled-in and maintains an ordinary mode of living with its accessories, relationships and conveniences and is where the Member lives as an inhabitant and not a visitor.

²⁴ *Thomson v. Canada (M.N.R.)*, [1946] S.C.R. 209 at page 224

²⁵ *Quigley v. Willmore*, 2008 NSCA 33 at paragraph 21

²⁶ Report of the Auditor General, August 2013, page 13

²⁷ Report of the Auditor General, August 2013, page 13

The Panel directs that the House of Assembly Management Commission identify the factors to be considered so as to practically apply the definition of ordinary residence as defined in recommendation 4.2. In listing these factors the Commission must ensure that when applying the factors only one place can be identified as the MLA's residence. Acknowledging that disputes may arise in applying the factors where an MLA is of the view that he or she has more than one residence based on an individual MLA's circumstances, the Panel further directs the House of Assembly Management Commission to define a dispute resolution process to respond to these situations. The House of Assembly Management Commission shall accomplish this by enacting specific regulations pursuant to the authority set out at subsection 27(1) of the *House of Assembly Management Commission Act*.

The Panel is of the view that by providing this guidance it will go a long way toward responding to the Auditor General's request that:

"The definition of an outside member needs to be clear, unambiguous, and fully described within the legislation and regulations."²⁸

For clarity the Panel concludes that an MLA's ordinary residence is the principal place where the MLA is settled-in and maintains an ordinary mode of living with its accessories, relationships and conveniences and is where the Member lives as an inhabitant and not a visitor. This residence need not be within the boundaries of the constituency the MLA represents in the House of Assembly and each MLA can only have one residence.

The final element in determining whether an MLA is an "outside" or a "non-outside" Member, for the purposes of claiming certain allowances and expenses, is to set the distance between the place of residence and the House of Assembly. Currently the *House of Assembly Act* states that an "outside member" must reside more than twenty-five miles distance from the House of Assembly.²⁹ Many submissions received by the Panel stated that the twenty-five mile distance was too small and belonged to an era of "horses and buggies" as it did not reflect present day reality that has employees travel daily in excess of twenty-five miles between their homes and their place of work. The Panel finds and directs that a Member's ordinary place of residence must be more than one hundred kilometres from Province House so as to qualify as an "outside" Member and to receive allowances and expenses pursuant to the *House of Assembly Act*, the *House of Assembly Management Commission Act* and the *House of Assembly Management Commission Regulation* as an outside Member.

²⁸ Report of the Auditor General, August 2013, page 18

²⁹ Clause 2(1)(e) of the *House of Assembly Act*, R.S. (1992 Supp.) c. 1

5. ACCOMMODATION EXPENSES

- 5.1 The words “apartment rental” are to be removed from clause 27(4)(a) of the *House of Assembly Management Commission Regulations* and replaced with the words “accommodation rental or hotel accommodations.”
- 5.2 The word “apartment” is to be removed from clauses 27(4)(b) and (c) of the *House of Assembly Management Commission Regulations* and replaced with the words “accommodation rental.”
- 5.3 For further clarity “accommodation rental or hotel accommodation” specifically refers to an accommodation rental agreement or to a nightly accommodation rate. Applying the accommodation allowance to a mortgage payment and/or using it to build equity in a personally owned residential property is in no circumstances permissible.
- 5.4 The ninety-day limitation period at subsection 27(5) of the *House of Assembly Management Commission Regulations* is to be removed and replaced with wording that authorizes the expense on a one-time basis for the newly elected outside member who enters into an accommodation rental arrangement at any time following that member’s election.
- 5.5 Subsection 27(6) of the *House of Assembly Management Commission Regulations* is to be amended to reflect that all assets purchased pursuant to subsection 27(5) of the *House of Assembly Management Commission Regulations* with the exception of linens and mattresses remain the property of Her Majesty in right of the Province and must be identified as such by appropriate markings.
- 5.6 Subsection 27(4)(h) of the *House of Assembly Management Commission Regulations* is to be amended to clarify that the cost of vacuum, mini fridge, microwave, heater, water cooler, air conditioner and dehumidifier to a maximum per unit cost of \$200.00 and small appliances such as kettle, drip coffee maker and toaster oven to a maximum per unit cost of \$50.00 are acceptable expenses in addition to the rental cost of appliances or furnishings.
- 5.7 A new section is to be added to the *House of Assembly Management Commission Regulations* to permit a non-outside Member to claim expenses for an overnight hotel stay in Halifax when due to inclement weather; the time of day or some other reason, the Member is unable to return to their ordinary residence after attending a sitting of the House or a meeting of one of its committees and the

Member's party leader has provided written approval setting out the reasons for authorizing the hotel stay for that Member.

- 5.8 A new section is to be added to the *House of Assembly Management Commission Regulations* to require each party leader who has approved overnight hotel stays in accordance with recommendation 5.7 to table in the House of Assembly or file with the Chief Clerk if the House is not sitting on May 1st, 2015 for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2014, and each subsequent fiscal year thereafter on May 1st annually, a report listing the number of nights and the names of the non-outside Members that have been approved by the party leader for overnight hotel stays in Halifax.**

Currently a housing allowance is limited to an apartment rental in the Halifax-Dartmouth metropolitan area for an "outside" Member. While the Panel recognizes that the allowance should be used to pay for a rental unit and should not be used to make a mortgage payment or build equity in a real property purchased by a Member, the Panel concludes that the restriction to an apartment is too limiting as there are many other residential rentals available such as a condo, a flat, a house, etc. that may be adequate for a Member. For this reason, the Panel directs that the term "apartment," be replaced by "accommodation rental or hotel accommodations."

By expanding the nature of the accommodation rental in the regulations this allows an MLA to rent the type of accommodation that best meets that Member's needs. Additionally, by adding hotel accommodations this provides the option to the MLA to use the housing allowance to stay in a hotel rather than opt for a rental accommodation.

It is important to note that the *House of Assembly Management Commission Regulations*³⁰ caps the monthly accommodation allowance at \$1,499.00 per month. Only "outside" Members can claim the accommodation allowance – this means only MLAs whose ordinary residence is one hundred kilometres or more from Province House (see recommendation 4.6). The unclaimed balance in any month may be claimed in a subsequent month by the MLA. This allows maximum flexibility to an MLA who may choose hotel accommodation for individual nights stayed in the Halifax-Dartmouth metropolitan area rather than a monthly rental arrangement, especially when the House of Assembly sits for an entire month as the maximum claimable per

³⁰ Section 27

night hotel accommodation amount is capped at \$153.00,³¹ and the monthly expense for a particular month may surpass or be less than the monthly accommodation allowance.

An outside Member who currently enters into a rental accommodation arrangement is entitled to a \$2,550.00 allowance to purchase furnishings, utensils, cookware, linens and appliances for the rental accommodation. However, in accordance with the present rules, the allowance must be taken during the first ninety days following the election date.³² The Panel finds that this timing restriction may cause outside Members to enter into rental arrangements hastily without firstly exploring the potentially least expensive hotel accommodation option. Consequently, the Panel recommends that the ninety-day limitation be removed as a requirement to access the furnishings allowance. Nonetheless, it must be clearly stated that the allowance is only available once to an outside Member and only upon that Member entering into an accommodation rental arrangement. This can happen any time following that Member's election, but is on a one-time basis only.

Additionally, the Panel is of the view that rental accommodation furnishings purchased, with the exception of linens and mattresses, are the property of the Province, given their purchase with public funds, and the *House of Assembly Management Commission Regulations* must be amended to reflect this. The current Regulations are not clear on this issue and require clarification. Additionally, the types of acceptable items for purchase as "furnishings, utensils, cookware, linens and appliances" shall include the cost of vacuum, mini fridge, microwave, heater, water cooler, air conditioner and dehumidifier to a maximum per unit cost of \$200.00 and small appliances such as kettle, drip coffee maker and toaster oven to a maximum per unit cost of \$50.00 and the rental cost of appliances or furnishings. The maximum amount for this allowance continues at \$2,550.00.

As stated above, overnight accommodation when the House of Assembly or one of its committee sits, is not an expense that an "inside" MLA can claim for reimbursement. On implementing recommendation 4.6 above, this means an MLA who resides less than one hundred kilometres from Province House cannot claim the expense.

The Panel recognizes that there may be circumstances that would affect the personal safety of an "inside" MLA if that MLA was required to return to their residence after a sitting of the House of Assembly or one of its committees – this could be inclement weather, time of day, etc. For this reason, the Panel concludes that a "non-outside" Member may claim the expense of an overnight hotel stay in Halifax of no more than the capped amount set out in the

³¹ Clause 26(1)(a)(i) of the *House of Assembly Management Commission Regulations*

³² Subsection 27(5) of the *House of Assembly Management Commission Regulations*

Regulations, when the Member's party leader has provided written reasons for the hotel stay and has approved the stay.

The Panel considers it necessary to have the party leader, commencing on May 1, 2015 for the fiscal year April 1, 2014 to March 1, 2015, and continuing on May 1st of each subsequent year for each fiscal year, to report on the number of overnight hotel stays and provide the name of the "inside" MLAs for whom the overnight stays were approved. Additionally, the written report is to be a public document and is to be tabled in the House of Assembly when the House of Assembly is sitting on May 1st annually or if the House is not sitting, the report is to be filed with the Chief Clerk and be accessible to the public. The May 1st filing date is selected by the Panel as it is a date thirty days after the end of the fiscal year.

6. TRAVEL AND PER DIEM EXPENSES

- 6.1 A claim for mileage expenses from the Member's ordinary residence to the Member's constituency office is permitted subject to funds being available in the Member's franking and travel allowance. The *House of Assembly Management Commission Regulations* are to be clarified accordingly to reflect this.**
- 6.2 When a Member's ordinary residence is located outside the boundaries of that Member's constituency, the Member is permitted to claim mileage expenses for travel from the ordinary residence to the constituency office subject to the availability of funds in the Member's franking and travel allowance. The *House of Assembly Management Commission Regulations* are to be clarified to reflect this.**
- 6.3 Clause 50(a) of the *House of Assembly Management Commission Regulations* is to be amended to state that MLA travel expenses are paid at the same kilometre rate as that which is available to civil servants rather than the 38.13¢ per kilometre.**
- 6.4 Clause 26(1)(a) of the *House of Assembly Management Commission Regulations* is to be amended to state that an outside Member, when attending a sitting of the House, is entitled for that day, to claim a daily amount on account of expenses, without receipts of \$50.00.**
- 6.5 Section 28 and clause 44(1)(a) of the *House of Assembly Management Commission Regulations* are to be amended to state that the daily amount payable on account of expenses means a claim, without receipts, for an amount that equals \$50.00.**
- 6.6 Clause 30(1)(a) and clause 34(3)(a) of the *House of Assembly Management Commission Regulations* are to be amended to state that when a Member attends a standing, select and special committee meeting; a Commission meeting; a**

- caucus and a caucus task force meeting, the Member is entitled to claim a daily amount on account of expenses for each meeting day, without receipts of \$50.00.
- 6.7 Clause 45(1)(a) of the *House of Assembly Management Commission Regulations* is to be amended to state that when a Member travels to Ottawa on business as a caucus critic or on constituency business, the Member is entitled to claim a daily amount on account of expenses for each travel day and each meeting day if on different days, without receipts, of \$100.00.
- 6.8 Section 45 of the *House of Assembly Management Commission Regulations* is to be expanded to authorize the Speaker to approve payment of unexpected expenses relative to a trip to Ottawa, on presentation of receipts and the Member's written justification for the expenses, if the Speaker deems the expenses appropriate.
- 6.9 Clause 46(1)(a) of the *House of Assembly Management Commission Regulations* is to be amended to state that when a Member travels in Canada other than to Ottawa in lieu of one trip to Ottawa under Section 45 on constituency business, the Member is entitled to claim a daily amount on account of expenses for each travel day and each meeting day, if on different days, without receipts, of \$100.00. When the Member travels outside Canada but within North America in lieu of one trip to Ottawa, the daily amount on account of expenses is \$150.00.
- 6.10 Clause 47(a) of the *House of Assembly Management Commission Regulations* is to be amended to state that when a Member attends a meeting under this Section, the Member is entitled to claim a daily amount on account of expenses for each travel day and each meeting day, if on different days, without receipts, of \$50.00 when the meeting is in the Province; of \$100.00 when the meeting is outside Nova Scotia but within Canada and of \$150.00 when the meeting is outside Canada.
- 6.11 Amendments are to be made to Section 46 and 47 of the *House of Assembly Management Commission Regulations* to authorize the Speaker to approve unexpected expenses in the same manner as set out in recommendation 6.8 for MLA trips as described in recommendations 6.9 and 6.10.
- 6.12 Clause 48(1)(a) of the *House of Assembly Management Commission Regulations* is amended to state that the Member is entitled to claim a daily amount on account of expenses for each meeting day of \$50.00.
- 6.13 Make necessary amendments to Section 42 of the *House of Assembly Management Commission Regulations* to provide that when a Member travels

within the Member's constituency and the distance travelled exceeds two hundred and fifty kilometres one-way, the Member may submit an expense claim for meals with receipts, provided that the receipt amount does not surpass the amount of the meal allowance rate available to civil servants who travel for employment purposes and provided that there are funds available in the Member's franking and travel allowance.

MLAs can claim mileage for travel within their constituency on account of travel related to the Member's duties as an MLA.³³ The *House of Assembly Management Commission Regulations* set out specific allowable amounts for franking and travel for each individual constituency. Claiming expenses for travel from an MLA's residence to the Member's constituency office when both are located in the MLA's constituency was identified as an area of concern by the Auditor General in his August 2013 report:

"We question the appropriateness of claiming mileage to travel from a member's home to a constituency office. ... While this travel may be related to a member's duties, it is no different from the daily commute of many Nova Scotians to perform their jobs."³⁴

The Panel received many public submissions stating that many Nova Scotians travelled great distances from their homes to their place of employment and they were not paid a travel allowance.

The Panel concludes that MLAs should have the ability to manage their franking and travel allowances in the manner they deem best and therefore, in the Panel's opinion they are permitted to claim mileage from their ordinary residence to their constituency office where both the office and the residence are located within the constituency **provided** there are available funds in their franking and travel allocation.

There may be instances, for a variety of reasons, when the MLA does not reside in the constituency the MLA represents. There is no legislative authority compelling an MLA to reside in the constituency the Member represents. Therefore the decision of where to reside is a personal one for the MLA. However, there can only be one MLA residence per Member for the purposes of claiming expenses. Again, the Panel concludes that the MLA in these circumstances is permitted to claim mileage from their ordinary residence to their constituency office provided there are available funds in their franking and travel allocation.

³³ Section 42 of the *House of Assembly Management Commission Regulations*

³⁴ Report of the Auditor General to the Nova Scotia House of Assembly, August 2013, page 20

For further clarity, the Panel concludes that in the event there are no available funds in the MLAs franking and travel allocation to claim the mileage referred to in recommendations 6.1 and 6.2 under this heading, the mileage cannot in any circumstances be claimed for payment.

When calculating allowable mileage claims MLAs are to be reimbursed at the same kilometre rate as civil servants. Civil servants are paid mileage rates at a per kilometre rate which rate decreases when certain kilometre ceilings are reached. The same calculations are to apply to MLAs.

The concept of per diems was a challenge for the Panel because of the diverse meanings and interpretations for this term. For the purposes of this review and for MLA expenses, the Panel finds that per diem means an allowance or payment for each day and the daily payment is to cover all expenses for the day. This means that the MLA cannot claim expenses for meals, taxis or other items for the day the per diem is paid.

Historically MLAs have been permitted to claim a per diem for each day they are in attendance at a sitting of the House of Assembly, attendance at committee meetings, etc. The per diem was meant to cover the cost of meals and in some instances other daily expenses – but the use of the per diem is at the discretion of the MLA.

The Panel directs that MLAs can claim a daily per diem of \$50.00 on account of expenses without submitting receipts, for each day, when MLAs attend sittings of the House of Assembly or one of its standing, select and special committee sittings; a caucus meeting; a caucus task force; when attending in Halifax other than to attend a House or committee sitting and when attending a House of Assembly Management Commission meeting.

Each MLA is entitled to two trips annually to Ottawa with two nights' accommodation each to attend on constituency business or on business as a caucus critic. The Panel finds that on these trips an MLA is entitled to a daily per diem of \$100.00 on account of expenses, without receipts for each travel day and each meeting day, if on different days.

When an MLA attends a meeting elsewhere in Canada instead of one trip to Ottawa on constituency business or business as a caucus critic, the Panel finds that the MLA is entitled to a daily per diem of \$100.00 on account of expenses, without receipts for each travel day and each meeting day, if on different days. When the trip in lieu of one Ottawa trip is outside Canada but within North America the per diem amount on account of expenses is \$150.00 instead of \$100.00.

With the prior approval of the Speaker, an MLA may attend a meeting of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association or a meeting of any other parliamentary or legislative group. Regularly, these meetings are held outside Canada. The Panel finds that the MLA is entitled to a

daily per diem of \$50.00 on account of expenses, if the meeting is in the Province; \$100.00 when the meeting is outside Nova Scotia but within Canada and \$150.00 on account of expenses when the meeting is outside Canada, without receipts for each travel day and each meeting day, if on different days.

MLAs who are critics of a department or agency of Government may attend with the approval of the Speaker four meetings per year within Nova Scotia when the meetings are necessarily incidental to the duties of the critic. When attending the meeting the Panel finds that the MLA is entitled to claim the \$50.00 per day on account of expenses without receipts for each meeting day.

When an MLA travels within the constituency the Member represents and the mileage distance for the one-way non-interrupted trip is in excess of two hundred and fifty kilometres, the Member may submit a claim for meals with receipts, provided the claimed amount does not exceed the amount for that meal allowance available to civil servants and there remains available funds in the MLA's franking and travel allowance.

7. CONSTITUENCY

7.1 Amend clause 21(1)(k) of the *House of Assembly Management Commission Regulations* to authorize a Member to purchase two event tickets for each event they personally attend.

7.2 Remove subsection 43(4) of the *House of Assembly Management Commission Regulations*.

The Panel finds that an MLA may be reimbursed for the purchase of two tickets to an event in the Member's constituency or an event outside the constituency that relates to the Member's constituency, when the MLA personally attends the event.

Every MLA has access to a monthly allowance of \$4,282.00 for constituency expenses, on presentation of receipts, related to the Member's constituency office. Currently, advertising expenses are capped at 10% of the monthly allowance. The Panel directs that the advertising cap be removed and that the MLA have the ability to allocate the use of a monthly amount as he or she deems appropriate on advertising in keeping with the House of Assembly Management Commission's advertising policies and directions, provided that the monthly allowance has not been exhausted for the payment of other receipted expenses for the month the advertising expense is claimed.

8. GENERAL

- 8.1 Section 22 of the *House of Assembly Management Commission Regulations* is to be clarified to state that a Member is not entitled to be reimbursed for sponsorships, donations and gifts made by the MLA.**
- 8.2 Expand Section 23 of the *House of Assembly Management Commission Regulations* to state that assets which are the property of Her Majesty in right of the Province are to be disposed of in accordance with the applicable asset disposal process directives issued by the Department of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal and by the Chief Information Officer.**
- 8.3 Sections 26, 27 and 28 of the *House of Assembly Management Commission Regulations* in their entirety are to be re-written to incorporate the recommended changes to the Sections listed above in this report to make the sections clearer, more concise and more readable.**
- 8.4 Add a provision to the *House of Assembly Management Commission Regulations* to provide when an outside member is defeated in an election or resigns, the Member is entitled to a maximum of two return trips from his or her ordinary residence to Halifax to vacate the Member's rental accommodations and the Member's personal caucus office.**
- 8.5 All legislative and regulation changes required to the *House of Assembly Act*, the *Member's Retiring Allowances Act*, the *House of Assembly Management Commission Act* and the *House of Assembly Management Commission Regulations* to give effect to the recommendations contained and set out in this report are to be undertaken as soon as possible.**

MLAs are asked by their constituents to sponsor events, make donations or offer gifts in their constituency to individuals and groups. While MLAs can use their own personal funds to support their community in this manner, the Panel finds that it is not appropriate to use tax payer funds to cover the cost of these items and therefore MLAs cannot claim reimbursement for these expenditures.

Assets purchased by MLAs for their constituency offices that are the property of Her Majesty in right of the Province are to be disposed of in accordance with applicable disposal process directives issued by the Department of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal and by the Chief Information Officer.

To assist an outside MLA, who resigns or is defeated in an election, to vacate the Member's rental accommodation as soon as possible in an effort to save tax payer dollars, as well as assisting Members with the added costs in vacating the caucus office in Halifax, the Panel recommends that an addition be made to the *House of Assembly Management Commission Regulations* to permit a Member to claim expenses for two return trips from the Member's ordinary residence to Halifax to vacate the Member's rental accommodation and the Member's personal caucus office.

The Panel directs that all necessary legislative and regulatory changes to give effect to the recommendations contained and set out in this report are to be undertaken as soon as possible.

SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

1. INDEMNITY OF MEMBERS

- 1.1 The current base MLA annual indemnity, the additional annual indemnities paid to those Members carrying out the duties of Premier, Member of the Executive Council having charge of a department, Speaker, Deputy Speaker, Leader of the Opposition and Leader of a Recognized Party and the annual payments made to Members carrying out the duties of committee chair, committee vice-chair, House Leader, Deputy House Leader, whip and caucus chair, are to remain unchanged.

2. MLA PENSION PLAN

- 2.1 The current MLA Pension Plan eligibility criteria requiring a Member serve for at least five years during two or more General Assemblies is eliminated effective November 1, 2013 and is replaced with the eligibility criteria requiring a Member serve at least two years as an MLA.
- 2.2 Effective the date of the next General Election, the retiring allowance earned under the MLA Pension Plan by an MLA or a former MLA who participates in and has contributed to the *Canada Pension Plan* is to be integrated with the pension benefits earned under the *Canada Pension Plan* and must be calculated as prescribed by the plan regulations.
- 2.3 Effective the date of the next General Election, a survivor allowance payable under the MLA Pension Plan to a spousal, child or dependent survivor of an MLA or a former MLA who participated in and contributed to the *Canada Pension Plan* is to be integrated with the pension benefits earned under the *Canada Pension Plan* and must be calculated as prescribed by the plan regulations.
- 2.4 For greater certainty, the changes set out in paragraphs 2.2 and 2.3 do not apply to retirement allowances and survivor allowances in pay on or before the date of the next General Election.
- 2.5 For calculation purposes to implement paragraphs 2.2 and 2.3 an MLA who is not exempt from participation in the Canada Pension Plan is deemed to be entitled to commencement of a pension under the Canada Pension Plan at age sixty-five, regardless of whether the MLA applies for and receives a pension under the Canada Pension Plan at that time.

- 2.6 The regulation making authority in the *Members' Retiring Allowances Act* must be expanded to include the authority to make regulations regarding the calculation of the integrated pension at recommendations 2.2 and 2.3.

3. **COUNSELLING OR RETRAINING SERVICES**

- 3.1 The timing of the MLA application to the Speaker and the Speaker's approval of retirement counselling, career counselling or career retraining services is to be changed from the date at which the transition allowance goes into pay to the date at which the MLA confirms to the Speaker, in writing, his or her decision not to seek re-election in the next upcoming election, whether the election date has been set or not.
- 3.2 When an MLA is re-elected after having received retirement counselling, career counselling or career retraining services pursuant to the *House of Assembly Act*, the MLA must immediately reimburse the cost of the services to the Speaker's Office.

4. **OUTSIDE MEMBER**

- 4.1 A definition of the term "ordinarily resident" is to be added to the *House of Assembly Act* and the *House of Assembly Management Commission Act*.
- 4.2 For definition purposes the Panel directs that an MLA is ordinarily resident "at the principal place where the MLA is settled-in and maintains an ordinary mode of living with its accessories, relationships and conveniences and is where the Member lives as an inhabitant and not a visitor."
- 4.3 The Panel directs that an MLA shall be ordinarily resident in only one place for the purposes of establishing whether the Member is an "outside" Member and entitled to certain expenses and allowances for the purposes of the *House of Assembly Act*, the *House of Assembly Management Commission Act* and the *House of Assembly Management Commission Regulations*.
- 4.4 The Panel recommends that the House of Assembly Management Commission list in its Regulations the factors to be considered to determine MLA residency as defined in recommendation 4.2.
- 4.5 The Panel further directs that a dispute resolution process to determine the MLA's residence be put in place for use, should a dispute arise between the Commission

and an individual MLA because the MLA has two or more places that he or she considers to be his or her principal residence.

- 4.6 The current definition of “outside member” in the *House of Assembly Act* is to be repealed and replaced with the following definition of “outside member”: “means a member of the House who is ordinarily resident within the meaning of the *House of Assembly Management Commission Act*, more than one hundred kilometres distant from the place where the House ordinarily sits.”

5. ACCOMMODATION EXPENSES

- 5.1 The words “apartment rental” are to be removed from clause 27(4)(a) of the *House of Assembly Management Commission Regulations* and replaced with the words “accommodation rental or hotel accommodations.”
- 5.2 The word “apartment” is to be removed from clauses 27(4)(b) and (c) of the *House of Assembly Management Commission Regulations* and replaced with the words “accommodation rental.”
- 5.3 For further clarity “accommodation rental or hotel accommodation” specifically refers to an accommodation rental agreement or to a nightly accommodation rate. Applying the accommodation allowance to a mortgage payment and/or using it to build equity in a personally owned residential property is in no circumstances permissible.
- 5.4 The ninety-day limitation period at subsection 27(5) of the *House of Assembly Management Commission Regulations* is to be removed and replaced with wording that authorizes the expense on a one-time basis for the newly elected outside member who enters into an accommodation rental arrangement at any time following that member’s election.
- 5.5 Subsection 27(6) of the *House of Assembly Management Commission Regulations* is to be amended to reflect that all assets purchased pursuant to subsection 27(5) of the *House of Assembly Management Commission Regulations* with the exception of linens and mattresses remain the property of Her Majesty in right of the Province and must be identified as such by appropriate markings.
- 5.6 Subsection 27(4)(h) of the *House of Assembly Management Commission Regulations* is to be amended to clarify that the cost of vacuum, mini fridge, microwave, heater, water cooler, air conditioner and dehumidifier to a maximum per unit cost of \$200.00 and small appliances such as kettle, drip coffee maker and

toaster oven to a maximum per unit cost of \$50.00 are acceptable expenses in addition to the rental cost of appliances or furnishings.

- 5.7 A new section is to be added to the *House of Assembly Management Commission Regulations* to permit a non-outside Member to claim expenses for an overnight hotel stay in Halifax when due to inclement weather; the time of day or some other reason, the Member is unable to return to their ordinary residence after attending a sitting of the House or a meeting of one of its committees and the Member's party leader has provided written approval setting out the reasons for authorizing the hotel stay for that Member.
- 5.8 A new section is to be added to the *House of Assembly Management Commission Regulations* to require each party leader who has approved overnight hotel stays in accordance with recommendation 5.7 to table in the House of Assembly or file with the Chief Clerk if the House is not sitting on May 1st, 2015 for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2014, and each subsequent fiscal year thereafter on May 1st annually, a report listing the number of nights and the names of the non-outside Members that have been approved by the party leader for overnight hotel stays in Halifax.

6. TRAVEL AND PER DIEM EXPENSES

- 6.1 A claim for mileage expenses from the Member's ordinary residence to the Member's constituency office is permitted subject to funds being available in the Member's franking and travel allowance. The *House of Assembly Management Commission Regulations* are to be clarified accordingly to reflect this.
- 6.2 When a Member's ordinary residence is located outside the boundaries of that Member's constituency, the Member is permitted to claim mileage expenses for travel from the ordinary residence to the constituency office subject to the availability of funds in the Member's franking and travel allowance. The *House of Assembly Management Commission Regulations* are to be clarified to reflect this.
- 6.3 Clause 50(a) of the *House of Assembly Management Commission Regulations* is to be amended to state that MLA travel expenses are paid at the same kilometre rate as that which is available to civil servants rather than the 38.13¢ per kilometre.
- 6.4 Clause 26(1)(a) of the *House of Assembly Management Commission Regulations* is to be amended to state that an outside Member, when attending a sitting of the

House, is entitled for that day, to claim a daily amount on account of expenses, without receipts of \$50.00.

- 6.5 Section 28 and clause 44(1)(a) of the *House of Assembly Management Commission Regulations* are to be amended to state that the daily amount payable on account of expenses means a claim, without receipts, for an amount that equals \$50.00.
- 6.6 Clause 30(1)(a) and clause 34(3)(a) of the *House of Assembly Management Commission Regulations* are to be amended to state that when a Member attends a standing, select and special committee meeting; a Commission meeting; a caucus and a caucus task force meeting, the Member is entitled to claim a daily amount on account of expenses for each meeting day, without receipts of \$50.00.
- 6.7 Clause 45(1)(a) of the *House of Assembly Management Commission Regulations* is to be amended to state that when a Member travels to Ottawa on business as a caucus critic or on constituency business, the Member is entitled to claim a daily amount on account of expenses for each travel day and each meeting day if on different days, without receipts, of \$100.00.
- 6.8 Section 45 of the *House of Assembly Management Commission Regulations* is to be expanded to authorize the Speaker to approve payment of unexpected expenses relative to a trip to Ottawa, on presentation of receipts and the Member's written justification for the expenses, if the Speaker deems the expenses appropriate.
- 6.9 Clause 46(1)(a) of the *House of Assembly Management Commission Regulations* is to be amended to state that when a Member travels in Canada other than to Ottawa in lieu of one trip to Ottawa under Section 45 on constituency business, the Member is entitled to claim a daily amount on account of expenses for each travel day and each meeting day, if on different days, without receipts, of \$100.00. When the Member travels outside Canada but within North America in lieu of one trip to Ottawa, the daily amount on account of expenses is \$150.00.
- 6.10 Clause 47(a) of the *House of Assembly Management Commission Regulations* is to be amended to state that when a Member attends a meeting under this Section, the Member is entitled to claim a daily amount on account of expenses for each travel day and each meeting day, if on different days, without receipts, of \$50.00 when the meeting is in the Province; of \$100.00 when the meeting is outside Nova Scotia but within Canada and of \$150.00 when the meeting is outside Canada.

- 6.11 Amendments are to be made to Section 46 and Section 47 of the *House of Assembly Management Commission Regulations* to authorize the Speaker to approve unexpected expenses in the same manner as set out in recommendation 6.8 for MLA trips as described in recommendations 6.9 and 6.10.
- 6.12 Clause 48(1)(a) of the *House of Assembly Management Commission Regulations* is amended to state that the Member is entitled to claim a daily amount on account of expenses for each meeting day of \$50.00.
- 6.13 Make necessary amendments to Section 42 of the *House of Assembly Management Commission Regulations* to provide that when a Member travels within the Member's constituency and the distance travelled exceeds two hundred and fifty kilometres one-way, the Member may submit an expense claim for meals with receipts, provided that the receipt amount does not surpass the amount of the meal allowance rate available to civil servants who travel for employment purposes and provided that there are funds available in the Member's franking and travel allowance.

7. CONSTITUENCY

- 7.1 Amend clause 21(1)(k) of the *House of Assembly Management Commission Regulations* to authorize a Member to purchase two event tickets for each event they personally attend.
- 7.2 Remove subsection 43(4) of the *House of Assembly Management Commission Regulations*.

8. GENERAL

- 8.1 Section 22 of the *House of Assembly Management Commission Regulations* is to be clarified to state that a Member is not entitled to be reimbursed for sponsorships, donations and gifts made by the MLA.
- 8.2 Expand Section 23 of the *House of Assembly Management Commission Regulations* to state that assets which are the property of Her Majesty in right of the Province are to be disposed of in accordance with the applicable asset disposal process directives issued by the Department of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal and by the Chief Information Officer.
- 8.3 Sections 26, 27 and 28 of the *House of Assembly Management Commission Regulations* in their entirety are to be re-written to incorporate the recommended

changes to the Sections listed above in this report to make the sections clearer, more concise and more readable.

- 8.4** Add a provision to the *House of Assembly Management Commission Regulations* to provide when an outside member is defeated in an election or resigns, the Member is entitled to a maximum of two return trips from his or her ordinary residence to Halifax to vacate the Member's rental accommodations and the Member's personal caucus office.
- 8.5** All legislative and regulation changes required to the *House of Assembly Act*, the *Member's Retiring Allowances Act*, the *House of Assembly Management Commission Act* and the *House of Assembly Management Commission Regulations* to give effect to the recommendations contained and set out in this report are to be undertaken as soon as possible.

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Appendix C – Press Release Inviting Public Input

Appendix D – Written Submissions Received by the Panel

Appendix E – List of Presenters to the Pension Review Panel; Hansard transcripts of presentations and written presentations

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MLA Remuneration Review Panel Members Chosen

Speaker's Office
December 30, 2013 2:14 PM

The three member MLA remuneration review panel has been finalized. Roy Salmon, Janet Hazelton, and John Merrick were appointed today, Dec. 30.

The MLA Remuneration Review Panel will review compensation packages, including salaries, benefits, pensions, travel and constituency allowances for MLAs.

"I want to thank the panel members for agreeing to take on this important work," said Speaker of the House of Assembly Kevin Murphy. "The House of Assembly welcomes the expertise the panel members bring to the table, and will do all we can to support them as they begin the task before them."

Mr. Salmon will serve as chair of the panel. He served as auditor general of Nova Scotia for 14 years, retiring in 2006. He is currently a Fellow of the Institute of Chartered Accountants and a certified internal auditor from the Institute of Internal Auditors.

Ms. Hazelton has served as president of the Nova Scotia Nurses' Union since 2002. Ms. Hazelton has sat on the board of directors for the Workers Compensation Board since 2005, and is the Nova Scotia Nurses' Union trustee for the Health Association of Nova Scotia Pension Plan.

Mr. Merrick, a known consumer advocate and former counsel to Public Inquiry into the Westray Mine Disaster, will also serve as a panel member. Mr. Merrick holds a mediation certificate from the Harvard Law School Mediation Program, and is a Fellow of the American College of Trial Lawyers.

The panel will begin its deliberations early in the New Year and will present its findings by March 31.

FOR BROADCAST USE:

The three member MLA remuneration review panel has been finalized. Roy Salmon, Janet Hazelton, and John Merrick were appointed today (December 30th).

The MLA Remuneration Review Panel will review compensation packages, including salaries, benefits, pensions, travel and constituency allowances for MLAs.

Mr. Salmon will serve as chair of the panel, and Ms. Hazelton and Mr. Merrick will serve as panel members.

The panel will begin its deliberations early in the New Year and will present its findings by March 31.

-30-

Media Contact: Glenn Friel
902-456-7416
E-mail: frielgp@gov.ns.ca

APPENDIX B

R.S. (1992 Supp.), c. 1

house of assembly

49

Regulations

44 (1) *repealed, 2010 c. 5, s. 33.*

(2) The House may by resolution adopt regulations fixing penalties for non-attendance of members and any monetary penalty so fixed and assessed is a charge against any money that the member is entitled to under this Act.

(3) Notwithstanding Sections 48, 50 and 53, the House of Assembly Management Commission may determine the salary of the Chief Clerk, the Assistant Clerk and the Sergeant-at-Arms after review by that Commission. R.S. (1992 Supp.), c. 1, s. 44; 2010, c. 5, s. 33.

45 *repealed 2013, c. 38, s. 1.*

Salaries and allowances for 2007 and subsequent years

45A (1) Within sixty days after ordinary polling day in each general election, the Speaker shall appoint three persons to make an inquiry and a report respecting the annual indemnity to be paid to members of the House pursuant to this Act, the salaries to be paid to the Speaker, the Deputy Speaker, the Leader of the Opposition and the leader of any other recognized opposition party pursuant to this Act and the salaries to be paid to members of the Executive Council pursuant to the *Executive Council Act*.

(2) Where no Speaker is elected by the House within sixty days after ordinary polling day, the Chief Clerk shall appoint the three persons to make the inquiry and report.

(3) *repealed 2013, c. 38, s. 2.*

(4) The persons appointed pursuant to subsection (1) or (2) have all the powers, privileges and immunities of a commissioner pursuant to the *Public Inquiries Act* and shall complete their inquiry and deliver their report containing recommendations to the Speaker or, where no Speaker has been elected, the Chief Clerk within ninety days after ordinary polling day.

(5) The Speaker or Chief Clerk, as the case may be, upon receipt of the report containing the recommendations of the persons appointed pursuant to subsection (1) or (2), shall cause their recommendations respecting the annual indemnity to be paid to members of the House pursuant to this Act, the salaries to be paid to the Speaker, the Deputy Speaker, the Leader of the Opposition and the leader of any other recognized opposition party pursuant to this Act and the salaries to be paid to members of the Executive Council pursuant to the *Executive Council Act* to be implemented and those recommendations have the same force and effect as if enacted by the Legislature and are in substitution for provisions of this Act and the *Executive Council Act*, as the case may be.

(6) The recommendations are effective the first day of the month immediately following the month in which ordinary polling day occurred.

(7) In each subsequent year on January 1st, the annual indemnity and salaries shall be increased by the percentage increase in salary provided to civil servants for the current fiscal year.

(8) With respect only to the inquiry and report pursuant to this Section following next after the general election of 2013,

(a) notwithstanding subsection (1), the Speaker shall appoint the persons to make the inquiry on or before December 31, 2013;

(b) the inquiry and report must include a review of and recommendations respecting all allowances, reimbursements, allowable expenses or other payments to members of the House pursuant to the *House of Assembly Management Commission Act*, including eligibility therefor under the *House of Assembly Act*, and all retiring allowances payable to members of the House pursuant to the *Members' Retiring Allowances Act*;

(c) notwithstanding clause (b), the Speaker may determine the scope of the review required by clause (b);

(d) notwithstanding subsection (4), the time for the completion of the inquiry and delivery of the report set out in subsection (4) is March 31, 2014;

(e) the Speaker may extend the time set out in clause (d) for the completion of the inquiry and delivery of the report; and

(f) subsection (5) applies *mutatis mutandis* to the recommendations respecting the matters reviewed pursuant to clause (b).

(9) For greater certainty, nothing in subsection (8) affects the authority of the House of Assembly Management Commission to make regulations pursuant to the *House of Assembly Management Commission Act*. 2006, c. 9, s. 2; 2007, c. 40, s. 1; 2009, c. 5, ss. 9, 10; 2011, c. 9, s. 23; 2013, c. 38, s. 2.

APPENDIX C

News (/news/) > MLA Remuneration Review Panel Seeks Public Input

News Releases (/news)

MLA Remuneration Review Panel Seeks Public Input

Speaker's Office
January 24, 2014 11:52 AM

The MLA Remuneration Review Panel is seeking public input and invites submissions from interested people or groups.

On Dec. 30, the Speaker of the House of Assembly appointed a three person panel composed of retired Auditor General Roy Salmon, Janet Hazelton, president on the Nova Scotia Nurses' Union and lawyer John Merrick, to examine all aspects of MLA salaries, allowances, expenses and retiring allowances.

"The panel members want to hear from all interested persons on these important topics and it is for this reason that the panel invites in-person presentations or written submissions" said Mr. Salmon.

Public meetings will be held in the Red Room at Province House on Wednesday, Feb. 12 from 2 to 4 p.m. and from 7 to 9 p.m. Presenters must telephone the Chief Clerk's office at 902-424-5978 to book their 15 minute time slot.

Written submissions to the panel may be sent by e-mail to MLAallowancesinquiry@gov.ns.ca or by regular mail to MLA Remuneration Review Panel c/o The Chief Clerk's Office 1st Floor, Province House, P.O. Box 1617, Halifax, N.S., B3J 2Y3.

Written submissions will be accepted until Feb. 14. All submissions will be included in the panel's written report to the Speaker.

FOR BROADCAST USE:

The M-L-A Remuneration Review Panel is seeking public input and invites interested people or groups to make presentations or written submissions.

In-person presentations can be made in the Red Room on February 12th. Written submissions can be sent to the Chief Clerk's Office at Province House by mail or e-mail until February 14th. All submissions will be included in the panel's written report.

On December 30th, the Speaker of the House of Assembly appointed a three person panel composed of the retired Auditor General Roy Salmon, Janet Hazelton, president on the Nova Scotia Nurses' Union and lawyer John Merrick to examine all aspects of M-L-A salaries, allowances, expenses and retiring allowances.

-30-

Media Contact: Brian Taylor
902-424-2936
E-mail: taylorbk@gov.ns.ca

APPENDIX D

From: Chris Folk <chrisfolk01@gmail.com>
Sent: Friday, January 24, 2014 2:59 PM
To: MLAallowancesinquiry
Subject: MLA pay, pensions, expenses

To Whom It May Concern,

I am writing to express my opinion on MLA compensation. I am a business owner and longtime resident of Nova Scotia. I am not a member of any political party, so what I have to say is not coming from a partisan view.

Let me begin by stating the obvious. Nova Scotia is broke, plain and simple. Our per capita debtload is one of the highest in the country, and at recent count our debt stands at just shy of 14 billion dollars. When interest rates rise, as they will sooner or later, the cost of servicing this debt will consume a massive portion of our tax dollars. As our population ages, health care costs will also rise. This is the reality. There is plenty of blame to go around, so pointing fingers at past governments is pointless. It is time for us to start living within our means.

Stating the obvious, part 2: Nova Scotia taxpayers have had enough. The cost of gasoline, electricity and home heating oil has spiked and is only going to get worse. Food costs, particularly for fresh produce and other healthy choices, have gone up, as have the costs for post-secondary education. Property taxes have shown no sign of deviating from their relentless upward climb. The past four years have seen the HST being hiked and provincial government user fees of all stripes raised repeatedly. Every dollar that goes into government coffers is a dollar less that could be going back into the economy and circulating to keep businesses afloat and people employed. While I realize the cost of property taxes, gasoline, food and other things I have cited are not within the control of the province, there is only one taxpayer, who in most cases has little or no more to give.

It is clear that what needs to happen is that government needs to cut its spending. I am not a union basher but I believe that government employee unions need to take a realistic look at the finances of the province and honestly ask themselves where the money will come from for regular salary increase demands of 5% or more per year. Corporate welfare in the form of 'forgivable' loans and handouts needs to stop - instead of trying to pick winners and losers and dole out taxpayers' money accordingly, it should be government's responsibility to foster a fertile environment for all businesses by eliminating unnecessary regulation and providing a competitive tax regime. Government services should be examined to see what can be reduced, and what can be eliminated. Hard decisions, and in some cases unpopular decisions need to be made to get our finances and our economy back on track through reducing spending.

The best way to get people on board with an unpopular and difficult course of action is for someone to lead by example. For too long politicians have told the people of Nova Scotia that "we" need to tighten our belts, and "we" need to pay more and more in taxes and fees. The problem is that the "we" never seems to include the select few making the decisions. I respect the fact that the job of MLA is a time-consuming, important position, and there has to be a level of pay commensurate with that. What I don't respect, and can't accept, is the ongoing disregard for taxpayers' money from politicians of all parties, as shown most glaringly in the MLA expenses scandal. Putting aside the criminal actions of a few, the 'gray area' expenses claimed by some MLAs, such as books, Bar Society fees and other things only loosely related (if at all) to their jobs as MLAs, shows that the entire MLA expenses system needs a complete overhaul. Hard dollar limits need to be set and strict rules put in place to prevent the 'oops, the rules were unclear' attitude displayed by many of those caught with questionable or fraudulent expense claims. All expense claims should be published online every month, and anyone caught breaking the rules should be expelled immediately with no pension entitlement. Travel expenses need to be

curtailed. If an MLA has to drive 5 hours, that is something that should be compensated. If he or she has to drive into Halifax from Truro, that is called a normal daily commute for many people in the province.

MLA pensions are probably the area most in need of reform. Again, I don't want to take away from the fact that we want proper compensation for the people working as MLAs. The key word there, however, is working. Paying former politicians a huge pension long after they have ceased to have anything to do with running the province does not provide taxpayers with good value. We simply cannot afford to do this any longer. It is also grossly unfair for former politicians to be collecting a lucrative pension in an era when most hard working taxpayers either have no pension at all, or whose employers are looking increasingly at defined contribution plans in order to get pension costs under control. I believe that the age at which former politicians can collect their pension should be set at 67, the same as when ordinary people can start collecting CPP, and the pension plan should be funded at no greater than a 1:1 ratio of dollars put in by taxpayers and those put in by the MLAs themselves. Rather than come out of general revenue, the MLA pension plan should stand on its own, and if it needs additional funding that should come from the MLAs themselves in the form of increased contributions, not from taxpayers.

If MLAs made changes to their compensation, especially the pension system, leading by example at a time when we desperately need it, I believe the people of Nova Scotia would be far more willing to accept tough decisions such as reducing services and cutting spending. No longer can we have two systems, one where ordinary people have to shell out more and more and the other where the elites get a lucrative pension for life at taxpayers' expense.

Past governments have not had the will to lead by example and show ordinary Nova Scotians that they are not above doing their part for the greater good. I sincerely hope this one will prove itself different.

Christopher Folk
Liverpool, Nova Scotia

From: Bill Fenton <lokilodge@live.com>
Sent: Friday, January 24, 2014 6:49 PM
To: MLAallowancesinquiry

Committee members.

I would urge you to consider attaching all MLA pension benefits to the existing RRSP formula.

The Province should contribute matching dollars to a maximum of \$6000.00 to each MLA pension plan for each full year of service.

This provides portability on defeat or resignation.

This should apply to all present and future MLA's.

Severance packages for whatever reason should be abolished. They each knew, or should have known, that it was not a "job for life".

They are entitled to all reasonable expenses which should be audited and made public on an ongoing basis.

Sincerely

Bill Fenton,
Bedford NS

From: Anne Rowe <anneprowe@hotmail.com>
Sent: Friday, January 24, 2014 11:58 PM
To: MLAallowancesinquiry
Subject: Stop the theft.

> Please do something to protect the Nova Scotia taxpayer from the outrageous remuneration paid to elected politicians. These people present themselves for public service, and when elected take the position that the tax payer pays for their every whim.

Automobile allowances, food allowances, housing. Why should the taxpayer pay for accommodation for a politician who sits in the House for only short times, yet we pay for yearly accommodation? Why should we pay for travel expenses for driving to work?

I worked my whole life, it was my responsibility to get myself to work, and pay for my meals while I was there. Where is the service?

It would appear that elected officials immediately become wards of the electorate. Most don't pay for their cup of coffee.....just submit the cost to the taxpayer.

Please stop the gravy train. Nova Scotia is POOR.

Anne Rowe

Sent from my iPad

From: hishighness420@gmail.com on behalf of Murray Sherman <murrays79@gmail.com>
Sent: Saturday, January 25, 2014 9:48 AM
To: MLAallowancesinquiry
Subject: MLA Compensation

Hello, thanks for taking the time to ask the public about MLA compensation.

My opinion on the matter is that MLAs should all have a base salary and Cabinet Ministers, the Leader of the Opposition, and the Speaker should get more as we do now.

And then from those base salaries each year they go up or down on a percentage basis correlated to the average income of working Nova Scotians.

So, for example the base salary as far as I can find is currently \$89,234.90 and the average income for Nova Scotians is 41,515.76

So let's say that the average income for Nova Scotians goes up to %3 at the start of 2015. That would be an increase of %3 so we take the average MLA salary of \$89,234.90 and add %3 to make it \$91,911.95. This would be the new base salary for MLAs for 2015.

Conversely let's say the average income for Nova Scotians goes down %3, we would take the current base salary for MLAs and decrease it by %3 to make it \$86,635.83. This would be the new base salary for MLAs for 2015.

I feel that this idea would give MLAs a financial incentive to increase the prosperity of Nova Scotians and let them share in our pain when times are tough. This would also help to eliminate some of the resentment the people feel for politicians who according to most are overpaid even if they only made \$1 a year. I'm not one of those people, but I feel this correlation would help to bring a few over to my way of thinking on that issue.

Thanks for your time,
Murray R. Sherman

From: Joan O'Keefe <jokeefesc@gmail.com>
Sent: Saturday, January 25, 2014 4:22 PM
To: MLAallowancesinquiry
Subject: a letter for the panel
Attachments: mlas allowances.rtf

Attached is a letter for the panel

thank you.

Joan

101-3000 Olivet Street
Halifax, Nova Scotia
B3L 3Z7

January 25, 2014

Dear Ms. Hazelton, Mr. Salmon and Mr. Merrick,

I do not think I can make the meeting with you in February because of my work but I want to address the MLA Allowances. I am assuming allowances refers to salaries, benefits, travel and office expenses.

It is really important to me that this be dealt with in a manner that does away with any feelings of entitlement because that is how it has been or somewhere else Members get paid more, etc.

We are in a province where those who are the least fortunate among us often hardly survive on income assistance, disability payments, and/or low wages. Elected officials and civil servants, for the most part, have “decent” salaries and have had those increased often due to factoring in COLA. That has not been the case for those who are less fortunate.

I believe MLAs should be paid reasonable salaries. They can have a pension program, but one that is considerate of others who have no access to such pensions. MLAs could pay a reasonable share into the program themselves.

I wonder about the generosity of severances. I also am concerned or should I say proposing that when people have finished their time as MLAs and are collecting a pension that they not be hired by the province for work.

More on those (civil servants/teachers/et al) who “double dip” in another provincial job or two while collecting a pension I will save and other items for another day.

Thank you for serving on this panel. I hope you will be able to recommend what is mindful of the common good for Nova Scotia.

Wishing each of you enough,
Joan O’Keefe, s.c.

From: robertcmackenzie@hotmail.com
Sent: Sunday, January 26, 2014 2:53 PM
To: MLAallowancesinquiry
Subject: [PROBABLE-SPAM] Mla pay.

Perhaps there is no real good reason why all mlas must have the same base rate of pay as, really they all come to the position with different skills, knowledge, background, experience etc... How about if they commence their term at a set percentage premium above their REPORTED income for the last full year preceeding their being elected to office. In a system such as this taxpayers might be more likely to pay for what they are actually getting and get what they are actually paying for than as is the historic/prevailing situation...

From: John Shaw <john.shaw.home@gmail.com>
Sent: Sunday, January 26, 2014 7:36 PM
To: MLAallowancesinquiry
Subject: A suggestion

Some qualification on attendance in the Legislature should be part of the pay and allowances scheme. I recognize that the MLA's work consists of far more hours outside of legislature and committee sittings. It is obvious that MLAs should not have pay and allowances reduced due to absence due to illness, serious family illness, death of a family member, etc.

What I do think is that MLAs who miss sitting days and committee hearings to go on vacation must be accompanied by a partial forfeiture of pay and allowances.

What do I suggest? No reduction in pay or allowances be imposed for absence due to medical and other recognised reasons when the house and/or committees are in session and when caucus meetings take place, or when an MLA is away on government business. If an MLA is absent for other reasons when the house is in session, committees are in hearing and caucus meetings take place, then their pay and allowance should be reduced on a per day basis. For example: If the number of day the house sits, committees are in session and caucuses take place amounts to 80 days and the MLA misses 10 of those days, then they should have their pay and allowances reduced by 10/80ths.

There are plenty of days when the legislature does not sit, committees are not in session and caucuses do not meet for an MLA to take vacation time.

MLAs should not be above the rules and regulations that civil servants, hospital workers, teachers and other publicly funded workers must follow. After the "MLA allowance scandal" per diem and mileage allowances for MLAs were set to match those of civil servants. So should attendance be changed to match those of civil servants.

John Shaw
315 Columbia Street
Sydney, NS B1P 4K1
(902) 564-5674

This email is free from viruses and malware because avast! Antivirus protection is active.

<http://www.avast.com>

From: brucebff@yahoo.ca
Sent: Monday, January 27, 2014 2:18 PM
To: MLAallowancesinquiry
Subject: Remuneration

I worked 35 years in quality management for large corporations. All had what I would call good pension plans until it came to light what our politicians are getting. I fully understand that politicians generally put their careers on hold so there should be some compensation for this. In saying this, most can return to their careers or businesses and will be able to save or have a good pension. So to have this plus a pension that pays them far far more than the average or even the above average person will ever have is wrong.

With all these benefits, huge salary, unheard of expense accounts that by in large are not monitored, lavish living expenses again not controlled, unheard of pension plans, and other perks, I believe we have attracted many people into the political arena that have little character and even less integrity. Prime example our Senate, our Trevor Zinck and other MLAs. We need people who are wanting to work to improve our country and province rather than themselves and by reducing some of these things I've mentioned so that they are in line with what they should be - this would be start. Please start by bringing the pensions to good level but not what most people including myself would call criminal. How could these people vote themselves these pensions and sleep at night when our governments are broke and people in their constituencies are going to bed cold and hungry. Where are the people that put others first; they must be in our military.

Bruce Fleming

Sent from my iPad

From: Horst martin <hwemartin@eastlink.ca>
Sent: Tuesday, January 28, 2014 12:24 PM
To: MLAallowancesinquiry
Subject: MLA Remuneration Review Panel

To whom it may concern,

I would like to share my views with you concerning the compensation package of our MLAs.

Taking into consideration our province's financial situation and demographics, with our young people leaving in droves to find jobs out west(my son just moved to Alberta last Oct), it is imperative that we adjust aforementioned compensation.

The Status Quo is simply not realistic for such a small, economically disadvantaged province like ours.

Compensation, including all aspects like salaries, pensions and allowances and benefits, have to be adjusted NOW to be in line with NS civil servants salaries, pensions and benefits.

The present MLA pension plan is unsustainable and unethical, requiring taxpayers not only to match but to submit 2 or 3 times the contribution of the MLA.

Housing and travel allowances require close scrutiny as well because the ordinary Joe Public does not get compensated for travelling back and forth to work. This is part of the job that you agreed to perform.

In closing I would like to state that I am hoping that the panel will come to an unbiased, logical and reasonable conclusion, meaning that our MLAs will be compensated in a fair and equitable manner, keeping in mind the state of our fragile provincial economy.

Thank You

Horst W. Martin
14 Lichen Lane
Lr. Sackville NS
B4C 4E3

864-9445

From: Beverly Martin <bevmartin@eastlink.ca>
Sent: Tuesday, January 28, 2014 12:27 PM
To: MLAallowancesinquiry
Subject: MLA Remuneration Review Panel

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Thank You

Beverly A. Martin
14 Lichen Lane
Lr. Sackville NS
B4C 4E3

864-9445

From: Doug and Nola Stoddart <stoddarts@eastlink.ca>
Sent: Wednesday, January 29, 2014 9:52 AM
To: MLAallowancesinquiry
Subject: Remuneration Review Panel

The Province of Nova Scotia cannot afford to continue to provide the remuneration/allowances that MLAs have received in the past. In particular, the MLAs need to contribute a larger percentage towards their pension plans.

Nola Stoddart

From: Brian Matthews <bm7680@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, January 29, 2014 10:10 AM
To: MLAallowancesinquiry
Subject: MLA Remuneration Review
Attachments: Pension Plans for MLAs.doc

Please consider my comments for your current review. Many others will have views on other aspects that should be considered however I will submit only the topic of pensions. Thank you.

--

Brian Matthews
At The Rookery
67 Park Street
Truro, NS B2N3J5
(902) 986-4495

Pension Plans for MLAs

Inequities exist between the tax payer and elected representatives. Pension plans for MLAs were created at a time when pay was maybe considered inadequate to attract good quality candidates from the private sector. At that time there was generally only one type of pension plan and it was a Defined Benefit (DB) whereby employees and employers contributed to pension plans and retirement payouts were based on years of service. Many of these plans have been disbanded in recent years because of the inability of companies to maintain their unfunded liability for future payments. By moving to a Defined Contribution DC plan where employers and employees continue to contribute to a plan, the benefits are now based on the value of the pension at retirement and the usual mechanism is a conversion to an annuity or RIF.

Also when these pensions were created there was not a mechanism to allow employees with existing pension plans to move them to their new employer when they were elected as a member of the House.

Furthermore, compensation paid to MLAs was a convoluted formula that allowed for tax free portions and taxable portions. This has now been done away with so that MLAs are compensated reasonably for their efforts and also have reasonable expense allowances which are appropriately monitored.

Over the years, some well publicized scandals have occurred when MLAs (and MPs and Senators) have been found in contravention of various policies and been removed from the house, some even pursued for criminal offences. This does not remove their right to a defined benefit pension. This aspect has created a real backlash against politicians who may be seen as only being in the system for themselves.

There would be two types of individuals who are elected. Those with existing pension plans with their former employer and those without any pension plan because of their previous employment status or because they were self employed. The first category could be given the option of moving their former pension plan to a new MLA pension plan without corresponding contribution from the public purse or choose to leave it with their former employer if they deem it to be to their benefit. The latter category had no anticipation of a pension plan except that which they created for themselves through existing tax sheltered programs.

I propose that we adopt a process that rewards MLAs like any other employee for being employed a certain length of time. We create a new Pension Plan that requires 10% (arbitrary) of salary, contributed by the province to a DC pension plan. If sufficient contribution room is available, MLAs could contribute whatever amount they desire from their own salaries. The investment of these funds could be in plans administered by the private sector giving a wide variety of options to the participants. Grandfathering of existing benefits should be maintained but all new MLAs and re-elected MLAs would start under the new program.

This proposal would have the following benefits:

- 1) Reasonable retirement option for MLAs comparable to the general public.
- 2) Low cost administration resulting in overall savings to the province.

- 3) Removal of ongoing contributions by the province for those removed for illegal activities
- 4) Members who did not qualify previously due to years of elected service would have a pension plan from the first day of election.
- 5) Transparency for all concerned.

From: Cecil Caines <c.caines@andre-media.ca>
Sent: Wednesday, January 29, 2014 10:53 AM
To: MLAallowancesinquiry
Subject: FW: MLA pay and pension 7 perks

From: Cecil Caines [<mailto:c.caines@andre-media.ca>]
Sent: Tuesday, January 28, 2014 3:19 PM
To: 'MLAallowancesinquiry@gov.ns.ca'
Subject: MLA pay and pension 7 perks

Dear panel members;

While I do not believe we need as many MLA's that we have, nor do I believe they are under paid, the biggest problem as I see it is the large pensions they receive as compared to the small amount they pay into their GOLDEN plan. As one who does not have any pension at all I find their pension to be totally out of line with the average working man in Canada.

I believe each and every one of the elected Members would run again if the salary was cut 10% and the pension was greatly reduced. And the foolish statement that more money attracts better candidates just does not stand up to close examination. How many teachers run, get elected and after 4 or 8 years simply go back to their teaching job? How many of them run for the glory? How many run for the salary because it is more than they ever made at their previous jobs?

To sum up: cut their salary and pension.

Cecil Caines

From: Shirley Dean <sdean@ns.sympatico.ca>
Sent: Wednesday, January 29, 2014 10:58 AM
To: MLAallowancesinquiry
Subject: Inquiry

From: Shirley Dean <sdean@ns.sympatico.ca>
Subject: MLA's remuneration
Date: 29 January, 2014 10:46:38 AM AST
To: <MLAallowancesinquiry@gov.ns.ca>

To the Inquiry,

I am not able to make an informed comment on the salaries that our elected officials pay them selves.They come from different professions and salary scales.I realize they put their careers on hold while in Public Service.It is the pensions that are out of line with reality at this time.It is my opinion tat they should be entitled to the same pension scheme as all public servants.We are a poor province and we cannot afford to pay these people such large amounts , they should be embarrassed to accept them

My other comment has to do with the distance from the Legislature members live that make them entitled to living allowances.Many folks drive more than 100 km one way to work everyday so 40 km is not reasonable.

Thank you for this opportunity to voice my opinion.

Shirley Dean

From: Christian Thibaudeau <abcproperty1999@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, January 29, 2014 11:40 AM
To: MLAallowancesinquiry
Subject: Hearing on MLA pay and pension benefits.

I see no problem with the pay. The extra allowances could be significantly reduced to level of provincial civilian employees.

As for the pension fund, it should simply be integrated to any ongoing pension fund the elected MLA is contributing and should be simply considered as continuous service. Some MLA's are already receiving a public funded pension and now they will receive a second one. That is far fetch. It should be continuous service and the pension should be based in the best last five years.

Christian Thibaudeau
ABC Property Management LTD.
sent from iPhone

From: intola3@aol.com
Sent: Wednesday, January 29, 2014 12:10 PM
To: MLAallowancesinquiry
Subject: Opinion

Follow Up Flag: Follow up
Flag Status: Completed

I am responding to the Panel's request for input on elected members' compensation. I understand the need for competitive salaries to attract good people into politics but I am very much opposed to any pension compensation. Nova Scotia has one of the most lucrative pension schemes for elected officials in all of Canada. Ontario, for example, has eliminated pensions for politicians. This is one of the most mentioned complaints I have heard regarding Nova Scotia politicians' allowances considering that many members of the general public have nothing more than the CPP when they retire. Phasing out pensions after the next election would do a lot to "buy" support for salary compensation which as I indicated earlier is a necessary attractant for candidates. They should not be seeking election for the pensions available after only two terms in office!!

Fred Gilbert
Midville Branch

From: Bradley Gaetz <bwgaetz@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, January 29, 2014 3:19 PM
To: MLAallowancesinquiry
Subject: MLA Remuneration

Dear Sirs, Madams,

We have been encouraged to offer our views on the present review of all remuneration for Nova Scotia MLAs, in person at hearings, or via email or letter. I must say that, unless I have missed something, there appears to be no automatic link from the Government of NS web site to the Remuneration Panel, so, if the review is to be taken seriously we are off to a bad start. A high lighted link would seem like an obvious necessity.

Any ways, hoping this email meets the panel's requirements, here are my views.

MLAs work hard. They take on huge responsibilities, get little or no real time off and are often the recipients of unfair criticism. They deserve fair financial compensation for that sacrifice and the current remuneration in terms of yearly salary meets that standard. However, like most Nova Scotians, I suspect, I take umbrage with the current pension provisions and travel and housing allowances. I have no problem with pension provisions being part of an MLAs remuneration, even defined benefit provisions, but those pensions should provide the same benefits with the same co pay provisions and rules as any member of the Nova Scotia public sector. The thin excuse that an MLA upon retirement or election loss has a harder time finding new employment due to their political careers, and therefore deserves enhanced pension benefits is so without merit or real evidence to be ridiculous. Indeed, the present reality seems to be that many current MLAs see a substantial uplift in salary upon election and can usually slide back into their former careers upon departure, such as in the case of those in the teacher's union, or are able to translate their experiences as MLAs into private sector success, thanks in great part to the connections made while in government. Substantial MLA pension reform is a must if the government means to be taken seriously.

Again, it is has already likely become obvious but the present rules surrounding housing and travel allowances are a relic from, literally the horse and buggy era and need to be updated. In an era when Nova Scotians travel all over the country and world, often at their own expense to work. The idea that an MLA living only a few hours from Halifax should require or be entitled to a housing allowance is completely without merit. Any member residing within three hours of the Legislature, especially given how little it actually sits these days, should be eligible for occasional hotel stays only, upon receipt and within limits. Meals and mileage allowances should generally be reflective, again, of the average in the governments own collective agreements with NS government employees.

Thanks. Good luck.

Bradley Gaetz
48 Haven Lane
Head of Chezzetcook NS
B0J 1N0
902-425-4362

Sent from my iPad

From: Diana Kane <dckane@eastlink.ca>
Sent: Wednesday, January 29, 2014 6:42 PM
To: MLAallowancesinquiry
Subject: Fw: MLA allowances and perks

We are seniors living below the poverty line. There are several things that we think need to be changed in what the MLA's are paid for.

The very first thing that we think all Nova Scotia residents are the most up in arms about is the amount of money that comes out of tax money and goes into a MLA's pension fund for each dollar the MLA puts in. What is it, a ratio of \$22 or \$23 to \$1? Why was this ever allowed to happen? The answer probably is that they voted it in for themselves in a private session. None of them would vote against it, now, would they? I think their salaries are certainly high enough that they can pay into a private retirement fund themselves. We are a small province with a huge debt and our MLA's have the second highest pension benefits in the country! Most of that money should be used to pay down the debt, not adding up to a posh lifestyle when they retire or get voted out. Another thing concerning their pensions is the fact that they shouldn't get a pension for serving only five years, that should go up to at least ten years, and if they're gone before that, they should only get what they paid in, with whatever the going interest rate for that time would be.

The next thing is MLA's getting living allowance if they live 40 km or more from Halifax. That rule must have been put in when horse and buggy was the means of transportation! The very least distance should be 100 km with the highways we have today, considering they get fuel allowance, which is more than many working people get who have to travel that distance or more every day to and from work. There are people here in the valley who travel to the city every day for work because they can't find work here.

Please take these things into consideration when doing your evaluation of MLA expenses and allowances. Just one more thing, who does your report go to when it is done?

James and Diana Kane
PO Box 667
Kingston, NS
BOP 1R0

From: Frank & Betty Dunham <fbdunham@eastlink.ca>
Sent: Wednesday, January 29, 2014 10:26 PM
To: MLAallowancesinquiry; SNSMR Minister
Subject: MLS Salaries

Dear Si/Madam:

Regarding MLA salaries or any other persons salary or wage.

When a person runs for office they are aware of the salary attached to the position they are seeking, unless there is substantial change in the persons duties making the job more difficult or demanding there is no justification for an increase in pay beyond a cost of living increase. MLA's who are assigned additional duties, e.g., cabinet positions, committee responsibilities, etc., are adequately paid extra for their duties and again, there is no justification for an increase in those allowances beyond a cost of living increase.

I hope the people of Nova Scotia will not be disgruntled by the recommendations of the Remuneration Review Commission or the subsequent decision of government on how much they are worth. Remember, you are dealing with people who are amongst the highest taxed and lowest paid in Canada.

Frank Dunham

From: Sheldon Shaw <sheldon.shaw@ns.sympatico.ca>
Sent: Friday, January 31, 2014 8:35 AM
To: MLAallowancesinquiry
Subject: MLA allowances

The process used to obtain feedback from the public on this topic of the MLA benefits package is nothing short of disgusting.

The popular basis of MLA benefits has consistently referred to attracting the brightest and the best to the political arena.

If such is true then WHY is our province in the financial mess it is in?

Personally, I have been attempting to reverse a decision on a clawback of about \$8500-\$9000/ year in financial benefits for myself and about 500 other totally disabled retired NS teachers effective in Sept. 2011, because our benefits supposedly did not comply with CRA guidelines.

The four so-called brightest and the best MLA's appointed to the NS Pension Agency along with four appointed NS Teachers' Union reps allowed this non-compliance to exist for years prior.

Check with the legal face of the NSPA, Mr. Ron Pink to clarify the timeline of non-compliance and to discuss the "gutting" of the NSPA in a manner that protects all EXCEPT the disabled victims for their actions!

I believe you will find that the non-compliance existed from about 1990 but wasn't picked up on by the BRIGHTEST AND THE BEST UNTIL 2011 and totally disabled teachers paid the financial price.

Grandfathering of benefits was not allowed and in fact appeals were not allowed until I complained to the provincial Ombudsman's Office.

When I did so I was informed it was basically a secretarial error that resulted in my being told appeals were not allowed.

I wonder if the other five hundred totally disabled teachers were told of the error?

Of course, the Privacy Act makes obtaining such answers next to impossible and not having "deep" pockets puts legal action by the Victims to rest.

Due diligence by this review panel would bring this panel across the province so the people could truly have a say!

Thank You,

Sheldon P. Shaw
261 Phalen Rd.
Glace Bay, N.S. B1A3B5

From: RegSabean <regsabean@eastlink.ca>
Sent: Friday, January 31, 2014 2:53 PM
To: MLAallowancesinquiry
Subject: MLA Remuneration

Dear Sirs:

I have no great quarrel with the salary paid to MLAs, Cabinet Ministers, Party Leaders, and the Premier. Once elected, MLAs are on call 24 hours per day, and their time is not their own. Having said that salaries must remain reasonable and within our means. Compared to other provinces, salaries in Nova Scotia are generally on the low end of the scale. MLAs should be no different. Salaries for MLAs in Nova Scotia should be in the lowest quartile of the average for all provinces. If they are not, action needs to be taken either by way of an immediate reduction or a freeze until they are in line.

As for expenses, it seems quite obvious the guidelines and rates must be clearly written and understood. It is most important that any claims be audited before they are paid. Having said that, most anyone over 10 or 12 years of age should realize it is not right to use someone else's money to buy an item and place it in your home for your personal use, without having it spelled out for them. Expense guidelines must reimburse members for reasonable out of pocket expenses and living allowances, if it is unreasonable to expect them to commute to their residence. As for other expenses, a good rule of thumb is to ask yourself if you would be spending this money if it were your own. Revenue Canada allows \$17. per meal ,or \$51. per day, and mileage of 51 cents per kilometer. I personally traveled daily for 6 years from Truro to Halifax and worked for no less than 9 hours per day in an office. I did not receive any compensation other than normal salary and benefits.

The MLA's pension fund is the elephant in the room which needs to be dealt with decisively. No one, other than the executive of large corporations, has a pension plan equal to that of our MLAs, and the latter are not employed by a financially successful organization. If statistics are correct, more than 50% of Nova Scotians have no pension plan at all, apart from CPP and OAP. Those who do are being told to expect less from their pensions and some pension funds are being wound up. The trend is a switch from defined benefit plans to defined contribution plans, if there is a plan at all. I strongly suggest MLAs switch to a defined contribution plan or RSP, with the contribution being limited to no more than 5 or 6 percent of salary, and a matching contribution from the Province. The benefit will depend on the contributed amount, and the performance of the fund. Any MLA wishing to contribute more can do so by making a contribution to a personal RSP, but like any other Nova Scotian, there will be no matching funds from the employer. Financial institutions would be happy to make a presentation and one could be chosen to administer the funds. It would not require the province to establish another administration.

Only a drastic move will bring MLA compensation in line with the reality of today. Anything less and this review will be just one more political show, and a complete waste of time and taxpayers dollars.

Sincerely

Reg Sabean
Valley, NS
902 895 3143

From: Andy Nott <anott@eastlink.ca>
Sent: Saturday, February 01, 2014 9:00 PM
To: MLAallowancesinquiry
Subject: MLA compensation

Greetings:

The following are my recommendations for MLA compensation.

1/ All compensation, expenses, and any other monies normally paid out to all elected persons shall be frozen at the Jan 01, 2014 levels, until such time as the legislature approves a fully balanced budget. The veracity of a "Balanced" budget shall be determined by the auditor general following the GAAP guidelines as established.

At that time, all MLA's shall receive an immediate 1% raise in their base pay. This is known as "Pay for Performance", and is what Nova Scotians expect from their elected representatives. There will be no increase, at this time, in the additional monies paid out for being the Premier, for sitting on committees, etc, since these things are to be considered as part of the job we hire them for. By doing this, the MLA's will show that they can lead by example in the fight to live within our collective means.

2/ Once a balanced budget is achieved and maintained, for every one billion dollars that Nova Scotia's outstanding debt is decreased, as determined by the AG, each MLA shall receive a two percent raise in pay, if such raise does not decrease the monies available such that the budget cannot be balanced without taking money away from the Health Care or Education budgets. At this time, a raise in the additional monies for committee work shall be considered, again assuming that the budget will remain balanced. Such raise shall not exceed two percent.

3/ In the matter of pensions; all MLA's shall contribute to a "Defined Contribution" group pension plan, at a rate of 4% of base pay for their first term serving as an MLA. If elected to a 2nd term, an MLA may elect to increase his/her contribution rate to 5%. If elected to a 3rd consecutive term, an MLA may elect to increase their contribution to 6% of base pay. The taxpayers of Nova Scotia shall match these contributions at a "Dollar for Dollar" rate.

4/ The pension plan shall be selected by a majority of MLA's in an open vote in the legislature. The group pension plan may be one that already exists, or may be created for this purpose. However, if a plan is created from scratch, then the plan shall be open to all employees of the province, union or non-union.

All changes to MLA compensation shall be voted on in the legislature by recorded vote. MLA's may decide to vote on yearly increases in advance.

However, no increase shall come into effect until after the election following said vote, so that the citizens of Nova Scotia may decide whether they agree with their elected representative.

These recommendations are obviously very simple, with good reason. There are no legal terms here, other than "shall" and "may". By keeping it simple, my hope is that the MLAs will find that they can engage the citizens of this province by being straightforward, upstanding representatives, who do not believe that they are "entitled to their entitlements", and who do not use "legalese" to create obfuscation and confusion.

If engaging the citizens results in greater turnout for elections, more citizen involvement in the governing of the Province by volunteerism, and perhaps even becoming political themselves, this would be a good thing.

Thank you,
Andrew Nott
43 Old Halifax Rd West
Three Mile Plains, NS

This email is free from viruses and malware because avast! Antivirus protection is active.

<http://www.avast.com>

From: David Carrigan <d.carrigan@bellaliant.net>
Sent: Sunday, February 02, 2014 9:27 AM
To: MLAllowancesinquiry

What bothers me the most about the very generous salary and benefit package for our MLA is the pension. Their pension is so far out of step with the lucky few Nova Scotia citizens that have a pension it boggles the mind. My suggestion would be to change the MLA pension to a Define Contribution Plan from the Define Benefit Plan that they now enjoy. At least then their pension would not be seen as such a Golden Egg.

David Carrigan

36 Birch Hill Drive

Stellarton, NS

From: Herlt Family <csherlt@eastlink.ca>
Sent: Sunday, February 02, 2014 3:13 PM
To: MLAallowancesinquiry
Subject: comment for this inquiry

Dear panel,

I would like to say that the salaries and allowances and especially the pensions of MLA's are too much.

First there are too many MLA's meaning that if they are full time positions there need to be less of them. More MLA's have not produced better government as we are not doing anything more effectively or efficiently. To compare, Saskatchewan is similar in size and population density and they have far fewer MLA's. I would also like to say that with less MLA's there would be less pressure to increase the economy to pay for the MLA's salaries and less people saying that we need to raise taxes.

Lastly, I would like to say that I find MLA's pensions problematic. I have RRSP's with a maybe 1% return and a company pension where the company matches my contribution up to a limit. I think I am lucky. I hear that the taxpayer matches MLA's contributions more than 1 to 1. This is not sustainable nor is it fair when so many are being asked to live with far less. It is particularly troubling when government is not even willing to look at bracket creep which actually penalizes those few citizens that actually do receive a modest cost of living increase in salary.

I believe that having public servants paid many times what an average person is paid is not right.

Thank you. Cathy Herlt 444-4063.

From: Amal Das <Amal.Das@Dal.Ca>
Sent: Sunday, February 02, 2014 8:02 PM
To: MLAallowancesinquiry
Subject: Please make your inquiry broader !!

Dear Madam/Sir,

I am a senior Canadian citizen(male) based in Halifax. I am a scientist.

I would like to write a number of things in connection with MLAs' salaries.

The first thing I want to say is this :

(1). Canada, following the USA, has become a high-salary culture.This has led to a number of socio-economic problems.Income gap is one of them. Even Obama is now speaking about it in the USA.

(2). The salaries of all CEOs, University professors and administrators, MLAs and others will have to be addressed together.

(3). I lived and worked in several European countries for a number of years.

Let us consider Austria, Sweden and Denmark. How do high salaries in those countries compare with high salaries in Canada ?

(4). Please arrange some public forums on salaries and benefits .

Thank you.

Yours sincerely,

Amal Krishna Das, D.Phil. (OXON)

E-mail:AKDAS@DAL.CA

[I am making my e-mail brief].

From: eric franson <e_franson@hotmail.com>
Sent: Monday, February 03, 2014 9:43 AM
To: MLAallowancesinquiry
Subject: MLA Pension Input

Retirement Eligibility

A Member of the Legislative Assembly may qualify for pension benefits when one of the following criteria are met.

- at least 55 years of age, with 5 years of service, and has served in at least two General Assemblies;
- at least 50 years of age, with 5 years of service, and has served in at least two General Assemblies (this is a reduced pension).

Calculation of Benefit¹

The following formula represents the annual pension benefit an MLA would receive:

- 5% X years of Indemnity Service (up to 15 years) X 3 year highest average Indemnity;
- 5% X years of Executive Council Service (up to 15 years) X 3 year highest average Executive Council salary.

My input is regarding pension eligibility. In today's world where life expectancy will exceed 80 years of age the age at which a member should be able to start collecting their pension must be reconsidered especially since the age of "50" today is not what it was 30 or 40 years ago. In today's working world more and more people, especially professionals, as MLAs are, are working in well into their 60's. Providing them with a pension at age 50 or 55 does not assist in supporting their need it merely provides in supporting their wants and a public service pension should not be in place to make one well off. These should both be increased by at least 5 years. While a teacher can collect a reduced pension at 50 you must remember it is only after 30 years of service...highly unlikely with the time they have to spend in school and look for a job in today's tight education job market of too many teachers.

Secondly is the 5% percent per year and best 3 years calculation. As a public service pension member I receive 2% per year and my pension is based on my best 5 years of salary. While an argument can be made I am sure about paying well to attract quality members to government, the last time I checked, those presently in office are made up of normal Nova Scotians, not elite businessmen and doctors looking to get rich but honest people looking to serve and make a difference. These 2 numbers should be looked at and changed. It guarantees that a member will get a pension if re-elected. Even if a member is an MLA for 15 years they can still contribute to RRSPs and have another 25 years to work and build a retirement savings in addition to whatever pension they may get. The pension they get now is ridiculously high. The percentage must be lowered and the amount of time to qualify increased.

Lastly they should pay exactly the same percentage into their pension that civil servants pay. If they get a pension, they should pay for their pension.

All these suggestion still see members getting a fair pension based on what they do, for how long they do and at a saving to the tax payer over the long havi. The longer retired MLAs live the more their pension cost. They need to do their share to get our provinces books in order not just for now but forever.

Eric Franson
Dartmouth

From: harold macneil <harold.macneil@ns.sympatico.ca>
Sent: Monday, February 03, 2014 7:34 PM
To: MLAallowancesinquiry
Cc: Margaret Miller
Subject: MLA Renumeration Review
Attachments: MLA REMUNERATION REVIEW.docx

Good day, I am attaching my submission and therefore my thoughts on the MLA Remuneration Review for your consideration.

Thank you for your time.

Harold MacNeil, Lantz, 902-883-0130

MLA RENUMERATION REVIEW

I am forwarding this submission for your consideration in developing your report and as a concerned taxpayer of Nova Scotia. I will break down my thoughts into four (4) subject headings and general thoughts:

PENSION - CONTRIBUTING BY TAXPAYERS – a reasonable return should not exceed what if available in other similar entities with the Provincial and Federal being used as benchmarks in certain areas. I do not believe that one needs to be always on the low side of the benchmark either. A pension of 2% per year to a maximum of 70% should be the high standard. The age to begin to collect should be 55 years of age. If an MLA would like to collect their pension prior to 55 then a formula for a reduced annuity could be initiated and then payment could commensurate with time and monies paid in. I believe the one(1) to 7- one(1) to 21 contribution depending on what reports and interpretation one reads is excessive and needs to be realistic as it is for other Nova Scotians. I am always reminded that Political Service to the Public should not be a full time job and the system has been designed for NEW people with NEW Ideas to come forward to represent their province at more frequent intervals that is present today.

ACCOMMODATIONS – I am a retired Canadian Forces (Major) citizen and spent much time on Temporary Duty and on operational training in tents, lean to's and other forms of accommodations. Each form of accommodations is designed for the training or exercise you are involved in. I believe that for MLA's to properly represent the citizens of Nova Scotia then very comfortable, suitable and good location are all factors one must consider when making these decisions when a member is FORCED to be away from the comforts of home and without family present on a regular basis. One would say this is a decision they make, but it should not be a punishment because they have made a commitment to serve the public of Nova Scotia in their riding. Standards for accommodations could be made in: cost, size, furniture, utilities, food (home and when required to host visitors from outside the area).

TRAVEL – TO HALIFAX AND RETURN – I would recommend a good to very good automobile allowance in two areas: cost of car and mileage. Those that live outside the Halifax area and are entitled to a vehicle allowance should be compensated for a car that permits them to be very safe while travelling. MLA's leave their families at home when they depart and the public has an obligation to make sure they return and if this means a good car that protects MLA's a little better because of the required travel because of being in Public Office then the public needs to support MLA's.

MILEAGE – I am assuming that an MLA with an automobile for which they have an allowance will be provided with a GAS CARD and that it would their responsibility to use the card for government business only. Now those who are entitled to a mileage allowance should be compensated for: mileage to include wear and tear on their vehicle, tires, running time, oil changes, earlier wearing out of parts, exhaust, brakes, depreciation, etc. The Federal Government has a formula that they use to come with a reasonable remuneration for this allowance.

I have commented on the items above in a broad perspective and with the thought that compensation should be fair, not gold plated and of good value to the taxpayers and electors of Nova Scotia's MLA's. The education level of MLA's is varied so I have no commented on this in regards to qualifications or remuneration because of MLA's education background and what the public sector would pay for their services. I encourage you to set a "realistic" standard which may help to remove the jaundices view of politics that is evident today. Also keep in mind being an MLA should be a service not a career.

Harold MacNeil, Lantz, 902-883-0130, Harold.macneil@ns.sympatico.ca

From: Jennifer Johnson <jenpeterhope@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, February 04, 2014 7:41 PM
To: MLAallowancesinquiry
Subject: MLA Remuneration Review Panel

Dear Panel Members,

I am writing at this time to provide input to the MLA Remuneration Review Panel.

I have worked in the private sector in Nova Scotia for many years, and like the vast majority of private sector employees in the province, my employer does not have a pension plan to which the employer contributes. As such, it is left to me to save funds to cover my needs in retirement, beyond Canada Pension Plan and Old Age Security benefits.

Again like most working in the private (and likely public) sector in the province, there almost always is nothing left of my salary after ongoing monthly expenses are paid (e.g., groceries, heating, electricity, lodging, water, clothing, school supplies, transportation, telephone, and so on). Thus, I look down the road to my 'golden years' with relatively little 'gold' as savings.

Having said that, I have been a faithful taxpayer of the Province of Nova Scotia for many years, and thus I have been contributing on an ongoing basis to pension plans for MLAs as well as provincial public servants.

An obvious question arises: Is it proper and fair that I should pay towards the pensions of others, when I am not able to save funds for my own retirement and the 'down the road' needs of my family?

That's it! Please provide an answer back to me concerning this question. Thank you.

By the way, the proper answer back to me goes something like the following:

"Mr. MacIntosh, the MLAs have decided you have a good point, and they are going to demonstrate leadership on this issue and remove themselves from their pension plan."

Thank you for considering my input. I look forward to your response.

Peter MacIntosh
154 Duffus Drive
Bedford, Nova Scotia
B4A 3T4
Tel: [902-835-7597](tel:902-835-7597)

From: Gary Whelan <gpwhelan@eastlink.ca>
Sent: Wednesday, February 05, 2014 3:02 PM
To: MLAllowancesinquiry
Subject: MLA Compensation
Attachments: MLA pay & benefits.docx

Please see the attached.

G. P. Whelan
Glen Haven, NS

2 Deer Run
Glen Haven, NS
B3Z 2S4

February 5, 2014

MLA Remuneration Review Panel
c/o The Chief Clerk's Office
1st Floor, Province House
P.O. Box 1617, Halifax
B3J 2Y3

Re: MLA benefits

To Whom It May Concern:

I am pleased that a study of the complete package of benefits due MLAs is being conducted. In my opinion, MLA salaries are a little higher than what would be expected based on the salaries of the majority of workers in the province but I can accept their pay scale.

What I can't accept are the generous pensions available to these MLAs. I understand the issues of attracting good people to fill these positions, however, they are simply well paid civil servants and should be treated as such. Most workers are responsible for planning for their own retirement and usually contribute to an RRSP. Politicians should do the same and have the taxpayers contribute a certain amount while a person is a sitting MLA – and nothing beyond that point. Another option is to treat MLAs as other government employees and have them contribute to the civil service pension plan with the same benefits of 2% per year for every year worked. The current pensions available to MLAs is unconscionable, unwarranted and in fact may become unmaintainable. It is time to change the status quo – we simply cannot afford this largesse. I expect your panel to recommend drastic changes to PLA pensions – we simply cannot justify these payments that are a burden on the taxpayers of today and will be more so for future generations.

One last point. While this is not within the scope of your review, I would like to go on record and state that there are too many MLAs for such a small population. We need a public review about redistributing the current boundaries and drastically lowering the number of MLAs. We have far too many politicians for our population base and considering the state we are in it is time to downsize.

Gary Whelan
2 Deer Run
Glen Haven, NS
B3Z 2S4

From: Ken MacDonald <macdonk103@yahoo.ca>
Sent: Friday, February 07, 2014 11:13 AM
To: MLAallowancesinquiry
Subject: MLA Remuneration
Attachments: Pension Plan Contribution Proposal.docx

To Members of the MLA Remuneration Review Panel :

Please find attached a proposal for your consideration as you deliberate on the issue of MLA remuneration. If you have any questions, do not hesitate to contact me at this email address, or at 902-737-2985.

Regards - Ken MacDonald

Pension Plan Contribution Proposal

I wish to offer a suggestion for your consideration regarding pensions of Members of the Legislative Assembly. I feel that if an individual wishes to offer for public service, and is elected to represent the people of his/her constituency, then that person should have pension contributions by the province as part of the remuneration package. However, I am proposing a change from the status quo.

If a person is elected as M.L.A., and is part of a registered pension plan at his/her place of employment, then legislation should be enacted so that the province can contribute the same amount to that person's plan as his/her employer would have contributed, based upon a percentage of the M.L.A.'s salary. The company would not contribute to the plan while the person is an M.L.A, but the M.L.A. would continue to contribute his/her share. As an example, if the M.L.A. is a teacher and the school board contributes \$7000 a year to that plan, then that is what the province would contribute (instead of the school board) while the person is an M.L.A. Also, the service time of the M.L.A. would count as pensionable years towards the company's pension. I realize that Revenue Canada may have to sanction this, but I believe that it is worthwhile to pursue.

For those who are elected and are not part of a pension plan before their election, the province should contribute an agreed amount to a Registered Retirement Savings Plan in the M.L.A.'s name. A suggestion as to what would determine the amount contributed may be the same percentage of salary that the province contributes to the pension of civil servants.

Thanks you for giving me the opportunity to provide input that may assist you in your deliberations.

Ken MacDonald

From: Greg Jollymore <jollymore01@ns.sympatico.ca>
Sent: Monday, February 10, 2014 9:00 AM
To: MLAallowancesinquiry
Subject: Remunerations
Attachments: MLA remuneration.docx

Panel:

Please find attached a few of my thoughts regarding the review you are conducting.

Greg Jollymore
21 Amos Gates Rd
New Ross, NS
B0J 2M0

To: MLA Remuneration and Review Panel

I became aware of the MLA allowances inquiry through an article posted in the Chronicle Herald. I have concerns that this issue has not been well publicized nor given a reasonable amount of time for public input.

In order to appreciate my submission you should be aware of some things about me. I believe in honesty and integrity and truly appreciate the work done by our politicians. I believe in fairness and reasonable compensation for their service. I thoroughly believe in the concept of “transparency” but I would suggest that the term is being used far more often than it is practiced. I worked in the public school system for 34 years as a teacher and am aware of the value of a pension plan but also cognizant of the suspicions that the general public has in regards to helping fund such a plan. Please also bear in mind that, like most Nova Scotians, I cannot make claim to knowing or understanding in detail, the very complex issue of remuneration for our MLA’S; however, as a citizen I have the right to voice my opinion.

I am very aware of the Canadian Taxpayers Federation and the work they do in trying to expose government mismanagement of our taxpayer dollars. I support the stand they take on many issues but I find that they don’t always have all of their facts correct either. It would seem that clarity is often a matter of perspective.

Before writing this letter I briefly perused the House of Assembly Management Commission regulations that serve to guide our politicians and those in charge of their remuneration. Simplicity is not a forte of this document and I am certain most Nova Scotians are probably not even aware of its existence or content. We, the general public, therefore often make assumptions about government spending, MLA salaries, and MLA pensions without having all the facts.

Having said this I would like to add my views on a couple of issues as I see them.

1. Politicians have a bad reputation, in part because of those who have used their positions for personal gain. Nova Scotia is not particularly “well-off” financially but we offer very good remuneration to our politicians and regardless of our economy or debt load; salary and compensation packages for them do not seem to reflect their willingness to share the burden. I feel that many factors, in addition to population, need to be taken into consideration before setting a base line for salaries. Generally speaking, “average” Nova Scotians are not paid for travel to work or just for being there and most do not have expense accounts for meals or accommodations. When individuals break the law we are fined and/or imprisoned; however, penalties for politicians performing similar misdeeds seem lenient. We cannot get away with saying “I’m sorry, and I will pay it back” as many politicians do. Whether right or wrong these are the perceptions of many Nova Scotians. There needs to be clear evidence that politicians are not an elite society and they are just as accountable as the rest of us.
2. Based on Nova Scotia’s debt and annual revenue I think we need a 10% cut in politician’s salaries/benefits across the board. I have had some real arguments with people who have used

the phrase “you have to pay well if you want to get good people”. My question for them is “how do you define good people”? I could name dozens of what I consider “good people” who are working for a fraction of an MLA salary. I do not associate a university degree, a lawyer’s diploma or a teaching certificate with the definition of a “good person”. What are the credentials for becoming a provincial politician, anyway? You certainly don’t have to have studied political science and the path to a political career does not involve years of costly study. If you were an employer, would you take a person without specific training off the street and automatically give them a \$90000 salary? Many university graduates after years of study do not get an entry level job that pays that well. I realize experience accounts for something but it still does not guarantee a person will do a good job as a politician.

3. I think that the MLA pension plan is exorbitant. By all means, our politicians should have a reasonable pension as should every other working person in Nova Scotia; but not at the ratio of contribution we are presently under. Pension contributions for politicians, as for teachers, should be matched dollar for dollar and eligibility for withdrawal should be the same for all (eliminating the two tier structure that separates politicians from the rest of the population) with the exception that politicians would be able to take their contributions and transfer them to an RRSP if they were to leave office or be voted out in an election.
4. In lieu of salary reductions I would suggest that after a single term in office that MLA’S become eligible for a service award of \$5000 for each year they have been in office. This would be a one-time payout collectible when he/she leaves politics and would replace any “bonuses” or other separation/transition awards.
5. If our MLA’S (anyone living beyond a 75Km commute) require accommodations in Halifax I would have a study done to determine the least expensive means of providing this service. Based on the number of days the member needs to be there, the cost of a hotel or apartment lease (with furniture allowance), and the number of out-of-town members it might be cost effective over the long run to construct or purchase a small apartment building in the Metro area. These apartments would then be available for members as long as they are in office and for their replacements once they leave office.

Thank you for providing me the opportunity to air some of my views on MLA remuneration. I hope that your review is studied by an impartial committee which has a real sense of what the “average” Nova Scotian is experiencing and understands that those who govern must also show that they are willing to share the burden of living here.

From: glen gibson <glenagibson@hotmail.com>
Sent: Monday, February 10, 2014 10:41 PM
To: MLAallowancesinquiry
Subject: MLA allowances inquiry

February 10, 2014

Dear Sirs/Madame,

Without digging out all my WCB records, or detailed reviews of what your rather short lived review, and ridiculously inadequate time for public speakers to speak on this subject, please let me introduce myself.

My name is Glen A Gibson. I have and am been an injured worker since a career ending injury in 1987, and I fall under that very inhospitable and I feel fraudulent WCB Board of Nova Scotia. The same organization that bleeds of inequality and unjust treatment of people such as myself.

Do not dispose of this e-mail. I mean in this way to express my point of "public opinion" towards your so called review of MLA's allowances, and etc.

As written in the article in our Chronicle Herald last week, by Marilla Stephenson, I fully agree that this effort isn't anything more than window dressing by the present members of the Government of Nova Scotia. Not unlike over ten years ago the long awaited review for injured workers on the WCB and Chronic Pain, which eventually led to back door legislation, eventually over turned by the supreme court of Canada.

My injury falls under the pre 1990's Supplementary Benefits Program. Between 7,000 to 8,000 injured workers fall under this program. A program which was put into legislation by the past Governments of Nova Scotia, and probably some of the present day MLA members. It is a dinosaur of a hand binding legislation, which in a few provinces has been ruled on similar benefit programs as being unlawful and rescinded, but not in NS yet! Essentially it states that I must put forth all of my income from all sources each year, even any injured benefits, including my Disability CPP, total those, and by legislation, I am allowed to receive topping up, so that my absolute Supplementary Benefits received for the following year equal no more than 50% of the Stats Cda average income for employed individuals, roughly put. Anything else is taken back from me by the WCB!

So roughly speaking my total income now, which I am grateful for, but never-the-less feel is woefully inadequate is less than \$21,000 per year, including my disability CPP benefits, which mind you have been in several provinces, ruled as not to be included in these Supp. Benefit Programs and is to be a benefit above and beyond the WCB benefits, and is not to be used in any of those province calculations for Supp. Benefits. So if this province were to follow the law, my income should be roughly, \$21,000 plus my CPP disability of @7,500. And that would be a nice change for me, and an entitled one at that.

And to add to this, the United Nations (I believe this is correct) I believe has deemed that it is unlawful to make a disabled person pension any less than an able bodied persons pension. And i strongly feel that where in the WCB of NS act it says a disabled person is to receive 50% of an able bodied persons pension, is unjust,

and should be adjusted to the same as an able bodied persons pension. After all I did not injure myself on purpose! And where in the world does someone other than a member of a stringent Government say, well, your injured now, so you are only worth 50% of an able body person's benefits. To bad the present MLS's don't do this to their own salaries and benefits.

The same people that made the WCB of NS legislation, who almost always ignore any injured workers appeals for jurisprudence and being treated as real people, are the same people that want more. The MLA's who feel they deserve more, should be very ashamed of themselves. it is so very easy to bleed untruths as a member of the Government of NS and then to approve raises based on a panel of individuals who are more than likely to approve those raises, because that's what they do. None of you are fully aware of just how unjust you are, and how unmotivated you are towards injured workers. I do not believe any of you deserve the money you are making, nor the benefits and perks as well.

If you want to do something right. I ask that you look into the WCB Act, and especially at the Supplementary Benefits Section, and tell me, is this lawful? If so then why in several other Provinces has the Supreme Court said, it is not? I also want the WCB to be investigated for fraudulent actions during all of my appeal process, from 1987 up until roughly 2005 when I finally won my case. And from 1987 until 2002, the WCB only paid me @ \$115.00 per month, with a little bit here and there. I lost my job, I lost my rather general but good Health Benefits, that included dental, optical and prescription. I need over \$10,000 of dental work done, I have only 2 opposing molars to eat food with, and have lost over 7 teeth, and have about 4 or 5 damaged teeth.

So i ask some if not all of these self important MLA's, just how much they feel that they really do deserve such perks and benefits, and if at the end of the day, they still feel they deserve said, well then, it truly shows just how bad this Government selfie image has become and how the entitlement of the MLA's has become nothing more than an every other year happening.

Please keep this on record for your pension Review. And please send a copy to the MLA for the Department of labour and the MLA for the Department of Justice. I would ask that they all contact me to review the credibility of the WCB and the part of the WCB Act that effects myself and over 7,000 other injured workers.

Sincerely

Glen A Gibson
208-324 Larry Uteck Blvd
Halifax, NS
B3M 0E7

From: Brian Casey <bcasey@hfx.eastlink.ca>
Sent: Wednesday, February 12, 2014 7:31 PM
To: MLAallowancesinquiry
Subject: Case for increasing MLA pay

I want to make the case for paying MLAs *more*.

In my view, there are two problems with the present system: people who are mid-career cannot afford to run for office, and the cost of running for office is a significant barrier (which rewards candidates funded by established parties and is a barrier to others).

As a result, our system favours career politicians and the wealthy and the business owner, and disadvantages new candidates who are mid career.

Why it matters

A consideration of *what* we pay MLAs indirectly asks *who* we want to run for MLA. If our objective is to keep the existing pool of candidates from which our MLAs are drawn, no changes are needed. If we wish to expand the pool—to attract people who now do not run—we need to change the barriers to their entry.

Running for public office invites scrutiny and there are draw backs to the job that have nothing to do with salary. Lots of sensible people would not run for office regardless of what it pays. However, it is important to fix the existing system so that cost is not as significant a barrier. Some people will still not run; our objective is to have a system in which people from every cross section of society will be able to run if they choose to.

Barrier 1: Mid-career costs

Lots of people who could make a useful contribution already have a career. In some respects, the best candidates may be those who have life experience, who have a track record in some other job. And are performing well enough in that other job to earn more than the \$90,000 offered to an MLA, or at least, for whom stepping off the career track mid-career will cost them more than that in the long run.

Running for office may require them to leave an existing job before they are eligible to receive a pension (or before they have the savings to do so), give up a secure and increasing income with no assurance they can get their old job back when they finish their time in politics.

As a result, we get a disproportionate number of business owners (whose income in many cases continues without interruption) and too few employees. I recall Allan Rock describing his decision to run for office – which required that he sell his house and buy a cheaper residence so he could afford the cut in salary. Candidates should not be forced to sell their home to run for office.

It is very much in our interest as Nova Scotians that people who are not wealthy and do not have a continuing business income—but are among the best and the brightest in what they are able to earn in their job—also be able to run for public office. The present salary (about \$90,000) is not achieving that.

It is very much in the public interest to create a system that encourages people who are not career politicians to participate.

Barrier 2: Cost of entering

The Nova Scotia elections office has recently reported on what individual candidates have spent in the last provincial election. The numbers vary by riding and candidate, but in rough terms they spend between \$35,000-\$70,000.

Put another way, to get elected in Nova Scotia a candidate needs to be able to spend about one year's income.

That barrier means that elections are accessible to the wealthy, and those financed by existing political parties or interest groups. Most individuals cannot afford to risk their entire income for a year.

That barrier can be reduced by campaign finance reform (limiting what people can spend, or more plausibly, reimbursing what they spend regardless of whether they are elected), or by paying MLAs more.

The cost of running is still a huge barrier to entry, but if the prize is large enough we can attract candidates who otherwise would not run. No one spends \$70 to buy a lottery ticket for a chance to win \$360; we are asking candidates to spend \$70,000 for a chance to get elected to a job that pays \$90,000 for three or four years.

Increasing what we pay MLAs is not the only way to fix this problem. However, if we change MLA pay, we may need to undertake campaign finance reform to compensate for the changes.

At present, we tell our candidates that they should expect to spend \$50,000 or more every four years (or more frequently); and that if they are successful, they may have to give up a portion of their present income, with no job security and with the expectation that they may be unable to return to their previous job when their political position ends.

If the job is financially viable only for the wealthy, and persons whose outside income continues once elected, and only if they have the backing of an established party, those are the only candidates we will have. I want a better choice.

Brian Casey

bcasey@hfx.eastlink.ca

From: lou <captlou@eastlink.ca>
Sent: Thursday, February 13, 2014 5:46 AM
To: MLAallowancesinquiry
Subject: [PROBABLE-SPAM]

Dear Sir,

I believe it is you that is misunderstanding the MLA pension scandal. Most Nova Scotians know that committees like yours, appointed by the government, will only protect the status quo. It is past time sir for you to wake up and take heed. The taxpayer is totally fed up with our bloated political bureaucracy and it high time the Gov understood this. go get you own pensions and stop taking them out of my children's pockets.

Captain R.L.Boudreau

From: Michael Lynch <mike@lynchpinwealth.com>
Sent: Thursday, February 13, 2014 10:58 AM
To: MLAallowancesinquiry
Subject: MLA pay + pensions

How can anyone sane in this province argue against a dismantling of the MLA pension plan? Is it not true that the former premier is now retired on a guaranteed DB pension greater than his salary? Dismantling the existing MLA pension plan replacing it with a defined contribution plan has to be done for Setting an example for the public sector unions. As much as it is unjust and unaffordable for politicians to be receiving this level of generous pension the same can be said for all public sector union members!

Mike + Marilyn Lynch and family
Mike Lynch
Financial General Contractor
Lynchpin Wealth

From: michael mcisaac <mcisaac_michael@hotmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, February 13, 2014 12:31 PM
To: MLAallowancesinquiry
Subject: MLA Expenses, Allowances and Pensions

To whom it may concern:

I wish to add a few comments re MLAs salaries, allowances and pensions. I believe that if one is to be serving the public in the capacity of an MLA that he/she should receive a salary that would fairly compensate him or her. As such, I have no problem with the current level of compensation, provided that salary increases are not above that which the average Nova Scotian could expect. With regard to expenses I believe that frequent auditing of expense claims and allowances should provide the necessary oversight to ensure that taxpayers are not being bilked. The area of greatest concern for me is pensions. I do not believe that a defined pension plan should be an incentive to draw one to public service since many Nova Scotians do not have a guaranteed income to look forward to upon retirement.

Pension plans typically have a broad base of contributors in the same line of work, whose contributions support those in their retirement years. In that regard those currently contributing can look forward to eventual retirement and being supported by those still working. A defined pension plan for MLAs means that the citizens supporting the pension plan (many of whom are not in a pension plan) will not be able to look forward to receiving benefits from the plan. Furthermore I would characterize the level of compensation in the MLA pension plan as obscene particularly when one considers the level of taxation burdened by the citizens of this province and the debt load that the province is under. To be in public office for 8 years and look forward to a 40% (8 x 5%) pension upon retirement at age 55 is self service not public service. I would also make reference to our former premier who served for 15 years (only 4 as premier) and walks away with \$130,000 a year while most likely returning to his preelection profession.

Another fact with regard to defined pension plans for such short service is that the taxpayer is on the hook for paying those pensions for years. For instance an MLA who served for 12 years (3 terms) and retired at age 55 would draw over a million dollars (not factoring in cost of living increases) in pension should he/she live to age 75. It is not inconceivable that a former MLA would then draw from 2 pension plans when he/she leaves his/her preelection job/profession. It is not a convincing argument that the taxpayer is compensating the individual for giving up what he/she could earn in private life. It would seem to me that the potential exists to over compensate individuals who do so. This line of reasoning further adds to the belief that the individual is self serving rather offering his/her talents for public service. As evidence by the MLA Expense Scandal, providing lucrative incentives does not guarantee that it will attract people who are concerned about the welfare of the citizens of this province.

I would suggest that the MLA pension plan be changed so that it represents a continuation of what the individual would otherwise forfeit in private life. For instance, if the individual is in a defined pension plan then continue with contributions to that plan (if he/she desires) until the individual returns to private life. For those without defined pension plans (and/or for those wish to opt in) a government contribution to an MLA matched RRSP would be a viable alternative. Both options would free the taxpayers of the province from a financial burden which would continue long after the MLA has left office.

I thank you for taking the time to allow me to express my concerns.

Respectfully submitted:

Michael Mclsaac
69 Kings Rd.
Sydney, N.S.

From: Len Fiander <lmfiander@yahoo.ca>
Sent: Thursday, February 13, 2014 3:32 PM
To: MLAallowancesinquiry
Subject: Pension & allowances

We firmly believe that NS MLA's pensions are far too generous. We agree with Kevin Lacey of the Cdn Taxpayers Federation that the present plan should be replaced with a matching, dollar for dollar RRSP plan. Taxpayers should certainly not be contributing more towards their pensions than the MLAs themselves are contributing. We also think that an MLA's constituency should be at least an hour's drive from Halifax before they are allowed to rent a home in town at taxpayers expense or claim an allowance for gas. A large number of Nova Scotians work in metro while living in rural areas and must commute for an hour or more every day. That is just something you have to live with if you prefer rural over urban living.

Len & Pam Fiander

Sent from my iPad

From: Webmail kayak77777 <kayak77777@auracom.com>
Sent: Thursday, February 13, 2014 8:49 PM
To: MLAllowancesinquiry
Attachments: Mla pay structure.doc

Submission to MLA Remuneration Review Panel is attached.

Thanks

Doug

I believe we need a different approach for current high MLA compensation. Salaries, Indemnities, Committee Payments, Constituency Allowances and Pensions have in some cases over the years created career politicians rather than treating it as it perhaps should be ... a service to the public. Some government decisions in the past were based on how to extend tenure in government to secure their financial well being with large departments rather than stabilizing the finances of the province. It's also clear that having high MLA salaries to try and attract the very best people to public service has also by and large failed in general. The duty of public service by itself would attract more I believe.

To set MLA salaries correctly we need to separate the true MLA work (legislature attendance; committees; caucus meetings; correspondence) from most other political work. I understand some Ministers and MLAs work harder than others but essentially Deputy Ministers run departments with direction from the Ministers of the day.

There are US States with populations larger than ours that have legislative salaries under \$50,000 and at least twenty under \$30,000 as of 2012 and no pensions.

http://www.empirecenter.org/html/legislative_salaries.cfm

If they can do it so can we. They appear to put Public Service ahead of career politicians.

Although public policy is normally driven by the electorate and not by salaries, this has not worked for Nova Scotians when taking our large public debt into account, and a new pay scale should be implemented that emphasizes Public Service. The fact that roughly only sixty percent of eligible voters bother to cast ballots should also be taken into consideration.

For the past few decades governments of all stripes have been unable to run the province with an actual surplus or balanced budget. This has resulted in a Provincial debt of close to 14 billion dollars. Year end actual financials must start to meet or exceed financial guidelines that are set in balanced budgets passed by the Legislature. The people of the province and taxpayers deserve a government who have year end annual financial statements with a true surplus so we can start to pay down our provincial debt, reduce our close to 1 billion dollars of annual interest payments on that debt and start reducing provincial income taxes along with addressing bracket creep. By decreasing provincial income taxes, more disposable income remains in the pockets of Nova Scotians to spend creating a tax friendlier environment for people to set up small businesses and hire staff keeping young people here. Sales tax and income tax revenue together would see an increase I believe. (More people working, spending, and paying taxes).

Governments have been too concerned with addressing short term issues rather than tackling long term problems. If we are ever going to make strides getting our province out of this fiscal shackle we need to start taking action now, a point not lost on our outgoing Auditor General. Failure to act will only lead to a worse situation down the road than we currently have.

One way to try to convince all MLAs to make tough decisions for the long term going forward may be to tie some compensation to their financial performance with base salaries plus merit bonuses for meeting fair and prudent budget targets with year end actuals that show a surplus which are included in that year's budget and are then signed off by the AG.

To address current high MLA salaries for career politicians and to emphasize public service, and to address high provincial debt and high provincial income taxes, I ask that you consider the following MLA pay structure changes.

MLA Base Salary	\$35,000
Merit Bonus with up to a \$50 million dollar budget and actual year end surplus.	\$5,000
Additional Merit Bonus with over \$50 million dollar budget & actual year end surplus.	\$8,000

A surplus over \$50 million is preferable, reasonable, and doable in my opinion. This actual result would yield MLAs a \$48,000 salary. One time payments or reductions in Federal Government transfer payments or provincial pension adjustments perhaps should not be included in the budget or actual figures for bonuses as they do not represent budget items MLAs had much input in creating as opposed to operational expenses and revenues in their regular legislative duties. Year end financial statements should be signed off by the Provincial Auditor General before merit bonuses are paid out for that year.

Additional Indemnity, Committee Payments, and Receiptable Allowances for All should see a reduction of at least forty percent from current levels.

The pensions for MLAs should be eliminated.

To create meaningful long lasting change, the panel must be willing to enact a significant restructure and not fear MLA reluctance to embrace change. Residents of Nova Scotia deserve a new era and brand of governance.

Respectfully Submitted,
Douglas English
Dartmouth, NS

From: Ramona Jennex <rjennex@ns.sympatico.ca>
Sent: Friday, February 14, 2014 7:18 AM
To: MLAallowancesinquiry
Subject: Submission from former MLA

Dear Commission Members,

Please forgive my informal submission to your review of MLA remuneration, expenses and pension. I am glad that the Chronicle Herald provided a link in an article yesterday.

There is a general belief in Nova Scotia that every former sitting member leaves with a pension. You are aware that one term members are not eligible. However, I feel that a legislative adjustment needs to be made to make it fairer for those members who come from public service. I was surprised to find that I am unable to contribute to my teacher's pension. The funds I contributed during my years of service to the province were returned to me and I am unable to contribute to my teacher pension.

MP's can purchase 2 years of service to the same plan but defeated MLA's are unable. In conversation with the Pension staff, they agree that purchasing years of service makes sense, but they said a Legislative change needs to be made.

Personally, I find myself in a situation I was totally unaware would happen. I needed to return to teaching and I need to serve the same number of years I served the province before I am able to retire. It was my understanding I could buy my years back, and now find I cannot purchase any time.

As part of your review, I hope to see the ability for members to purchase pensionable years if they are teachers or other public employees that have stepped up to serve the province. To be penalized at the end of service to the Province is a consequence that has been overlooked. I feel that this has happened as it only affects a small number. In my case, I would have retired this year if I had stayed in the classroom. Instead, I served the province and need to work the same number of years to be able to retire.

This would not be a cost to the province as my request is to be able to contribute the funds to purchase back at least two years (the same as Federal MP's). It does need a legislative change.

Yours,
Ramona Jennex
Former MLA Kings South
rjennex@ns.sympatico.ca
902-678-0733

From: Vince Schoenrank <vince.schoenrank@ns.sympatico.ca>
Sent: Friday, February 14, 2014 9:37 AM
To: MLAallowancesinquiry
Cc: McNeil, Stephen R; Kevin Lacey
Subject: MLA Pension Fund

Hello,

It is my opinion that in Canada, there should only be one pension fund that everyone pays into; namely the Canada Pension Fund (CPP).

This applies to MLAs as well as MPs pensions. It would make the CPP more sustainable over the long term and Taxpayers would not have to contribute enormous amounts into elitist pension plans that were set up in the dark ages to serve special interest groups.

The burdens placed on taxpayers is becoming unsustainable. Everybody wants their own entitlement. However, we are all connected. Salaries and benefits in the public sector far outstrip the salaries and benefits available in the private sector. Some semblance of fairness is required.

Best regards.

Vince Schoenrank

From: mark shepherd <markshepherd@eastlink.ca>
Sent: Friday, February 14, 2014 10:17 AM
To: MLAllowancesinquiry
Subject: MLA Pensions

You are supposed to represent us - how can you , when you make 3 x the average Nova Scotian , you can retire 17 years earlier than us , and achieve 1.5 times our pension with one third the time and a twentieth of our cost !!!????

Play fair and you will get more respect - no one likes a pig at the trough.

Mark Shepherd
Pictou

From: MichaelEisan <homefiddler@EastLink.ca>
Sent: Friday, February 14, 2014 10:17 AM
To: MLAallowancesinquiry
Subject: MLA Pension plan

I believe the MLA pension plan is grossly over supported by the NS taxpayers. If this keeps up and nothing is done to stop the bleeding with the tax payer money that our kids and grandkids will be working and paying taxes just to support OUR mistakes. We can do something now to change the tide of spending and starting with the pension plan is a good first step.

A very concerned resident
Mike Eisan
827 7067

From: Roland Deschenes <rdeschenes@ns.sympatico.ca>
Sent: Friday, February 14, 2014 10:21 AM
To: MLAallowancesinquiry
Subject: MLA PENSION WRONG

MLAs should work 25 yrs before collection,, and using a system that for every dollar contributed by a politician, the government would match it and both would be invested in RRSPs.like most companies do these days...

R.J.Deschenes
RM-SM,eng,gaw.ret
38 Fireside Drive
Dartmouth Nova Scotia
B2V-1Z1

From: Bonnie Johnstone <bonniej38@gmail.com>
Sent: Friday, February 14, 2014 10:24 AM
To: MLAallowancesinquiry
Subject: Enough of the pocket padding!!

Could anyone explain truthfully why MLA should be eligible for pension after 5 years of service. My husband was a pilot for 42 years, retired now for almost 30 years, so we are going back in time, but the pension he receives after working in the Arctic, overseas and domestic, does not even come close to what these people are "entitled to" after such a short period. It is no wonder the public are not interested in voting, and feel as though no matter who they vote for, they will get another snowball job in the face.

Cut the pensions so that they are in line with everyone else. After all, there are many people out there who are just as or more qualified to take their job. If they don't cut it, fire them and cut off pension altogether. I personally worked for over 30 years as a medical secretary, and at the end I have no pension, and had no benefits during that whole time. Do I blame myself for this situation? I guess I put up with it, when I could have sought employment with any level of government and get all the freebies. Discount on oil, discounts on just about everything so long as you have that blessed card showing you are a provincial employee. On top of that, my neighbour who has only been with the prov. govt. for a couple of years, gets a day off every other week with pay. Where did p"productivity" ever go. They are servants of the public and deserve no better than Joe across the street. They are not indispensable. Enough!! Bonnie J

From: Ken Hiltz <KRHiltz@eastlink.ca>
Sent: Friday, February 14, 2014 10:31 AM
To: MLAallowancesinquiry
Subject: MLA Pensions

Dear Sir or Madam,

MLAs should have the same or similar pension as NS civil servants and should pay 50% of the cost of their pension as do civil servants. Reducing their pensions to that model must not result in an increase in their pay or other benefits some of which should also be reduced!

Regards,
Ken Hiltz

From: ellie <kennie@ns.sympatico.ca>
Sent: Friday, February 14, 2014 10:32 AM
To: MLAallowancesinquiry
Subject: Pensions

I don't mind creating a pension plan for those who are truly worthy. But why do the rest of Nova Scotians have to go without in order to overindulge someone who got elected, only because there was no one any better, and not because they are going to do an honorable job.

I object to this entitlement and support any measures to have it changed, although in Nova Scotia, I know change isn't going to happen.

Cynically inclined from too many years living here.

e. kennie

From: donald allan <donald.a.allan@gmail.com>
Sent: Friday, February 14, 2014 10:39 AM
To: MLAallowancesinquiry
Subject: MLA Pensions

MLA's should not be able to collect pensions until 65, escalating to 68 along with the rest of the population. Any contributions to a pension plan should be matched 50/50 with the government. A ratio of 1 to 22 is scandalous and is a clear indication that the system which allowed this to happen is completely out of whack with the private sector.

Only an independent public body should be able to determine wages and benefits.

We are a small province with a population of less than a million people and we cannot afford a government that is top heavy and inefficient.

A frustrated taxpayer,
Donald Allan

From: clyde@staff.ednet.ns.ca
Sent: Friday, February 14, 2014 10:39 AM
To: MLAallowancesinquiry
Subject: MLA pensions

To whom it may concern,

Watching MLA's and MP's who feel entitled to their various perks, one wonders where the idea of service went astray. MLA's and MP's should be required to have the same pension rules as all other Canadians have. They should not get a pension that allows them to get out of politics after 5 years and have an entitlement to a pension.

As a taxpayer I am fed up with hearing politicians talk about their entitlements. It is time they earned their pay and their pensions as all other Canadians have to do. I know the theory of politicians is that high pay and great pensions draws better people. That must be how we got Duffy, Hurlburt and all the other folks who break all the rules and feel entitled to do so. Obviously this concept of better pay and perks draw better people is wrong. It is also time that when they take money they are not entitled to that they suffer the fate of regular Canadians who do similar kinds of things. They are after all just citizens like the rest of us and should have the same rules as the rest of us. They should lead by example if they are truly leaders of quality.

Sincerely,

Clyde Baltzer

From: Dr. Mark Bodnar <drbodnar@accesswave.ca>
Sent: Friday, February 14, 2014 10:43 AM
To: MLAallowancesinquiry
Subject: MLA Pensions

I have voiced my concerns in the past, and continue to do so as I feel these issues are very important.

As a small business owner I have no pension, and feel the sting of paying higher and higher taxes for seemingly less and less services.
The combination of Federal, Provincial and Municipal taxes, on top of sales taxes makes it very difficult for me to squirrel money away for retirement.

To hear that my hard earned money is being tossed hand over fist into pensions for politicians is infuriating, and further erodes any shred of hope that the government is working for the betterment of the public.
It's time to stop this foolishness. It is fair to have a pension process where an employer matches the employee RRSP deposits - not something where the taxpayers foot almost the entire bill.

At the same time I recognize that we need to remunerate our politicians at a reasonable level, something that will still attract skilled and knowledgeable people to the table. But that does not equate with creating a pension plan that is akin to winning the lottery!

Bring some fairness to the process. Pay MLA's fairly for their time and efforts, and keep the pensions reasonable.

Thanks for the time,
Mark Bodnar

--

Dr. Mark Bodnar
B.Sc., D.C., FCCOPR(C)
Bedford Chiropractic

There is no cure for birth and death save to enjoy the interval.
- George Santayana

From: robert snow <robert.snow@ns.sympatico.ca>
Sent: Friday, February 14, 2014 10:44 AM
To: MLAallowancesinquiry
Subject: Shameful

I am writing to say I find this pension plan shameful, especially when you compare it to most of the ordinary citizens of this Province. For me I have a reasonable pension after working for 35 years with the same company. With it being one of the largest in the Province, they still came no way near, not even close to a \$1 for \$22 contribution plan. From what I have read lately in the papers maybe our Veterans could use some of this excessive contribution moneys. It's time we put things in order.

Most Sincerely,
Robert Snow

From: NG Weightloss Clinin <ngweightlossclinic@gmail.com>
Sent: Friday, February 14, 2014 10:59 AM
To: MLAllowancesinquiry
Subject: Major Concern For Us Taxpayers

- This must stop, Nova Scotians are living on a thread now to make ends meet, power bills, oil bills, taxes etc., etc.; we can not afford these additional costs which are out of control anyhow, for personal gain ONLY. Not for the tax payers.
- Len Walser

From: Linda McInnis <mcinlinda@gmail.com>
Sent: Friday, February 14, 2014 11:18 AM
To: MLAllowancesinquiry

I think that the MLA Pension Plan should be like any private sector plan, dollar for dollar. They should not be able to collect it til age 65 like every one else. I also think that they should have to serve for 10 years before being eligible for a pension.

From: Peter Mac Isaac <prmibullrun@gmail.com>
Sent: Friday, February 14, 2014 11:19 AM
To: MLAallowancesinquiry
Subject: mla pensions and salary

It would appear that once a person becomes involved in politics the ability to ride the political fence is no longer an option. Many persons coming from a business background set themselves up for living under a microscope and close the doors to privacy and business from patrons who may not support your political ideology. It this number one reason quoted to me by business owners for not being involved openly with a political party. How would one quantify the lost revenues from sticking your neck out to run for politics? Would it be the million dollar contract you didn't get because you represent a certain party? Or maybe the 30% loss in store traffic you blame on the economy. Throughout the provincial government most persons at a director level are in the 6 figure pay bracket and are not responsible for but a fraction of what an MLA is responsible for yet make 10% more annually. Deputy ministers routinely make more than there boss who is the minister, sometimes as much as 15 to 20%. It would appear that a good many people run for office to make a difference but the financial remuneration is not worth the grief for what they are subjected to. The pay is too low for an MLA and the pensions are too rich. MLA pay should parallel the civil service based on responsibility and MLAs should contribute more to their own pensions. Ministers should not be making less than their deputies. The fact that resuming ones former job circumstance is not always an option after being an MLA should remain a significant factor in determining pension benefits.

--

Peter Mac Isaac Bull Run Productions Inc. Bedford NS Canada B4A 3T7 phone 902-489-9162 Fax 902-406-9392
www.bullrun.ca "Excellence Matters"

All correspondence is considered confidential and unauthorized publication, transfer or use is strictly prohibited.

From: Margaret Clarkson <caprimaggie@eastlink.ca>
Sent: Friday, February 14, 2014 11:25 AM
To: MLAllowancesinquiry
Subject: Please

PLEASE: PLEASE:PLEASE: Get back to reality where your pensions are concerned. Can you not feel and see the scorn accorded you by your constituents where pensions are concerned ? We do not elect you to steal us blind with fat pensions and exorbitant spending.

Many of the electorate of Nova Scotia feel their MLAs are not drawn to politics to serve their constituents, but to live off them, and set themselves up while doing it.

Margaret Clarkson

From: PaulDruhan <pdruhan@eastlink.ca>
Sent: Friday, February 14, 2014 11:29 AM
To: MLAllowancesinquiry
Subject: MLA's Pensions

These pension programs are outrages !...On behalf of the average taxpayer , PLEASE adjust these Gold plans to a more realistic plan.....

Thank you

Paul Druhan...

From: McDonald, MaryJane <maryjane.mcdonald@mosaic.com>
Sent: Friday, February 14, 2014 11:32 AM
To: MLAallowancesinquiry
Subject: pensions

I feel that the idea of a dollar for dollar contribution to a RRSP would be a sustainable form of pension for Premier and MLAs across the board. No other section of society gets the type of pension that is now the norm in politics. I realize that they are putting their normal means of earning a living on hold for 4 to 8 years BUT this is their choice . They enter politics because of idealism and civic duty. They hope to make a difference. I applaud this but not on the backs of the taxpayer. Their pensions, expenses and perks all have to be reined in...compensation for everything has gotten completely out of hand. This province has an aging population whose young people have all gone west to work. Instead of lining the pockets of a few, the money would be better spent on jobs to bring our children back home. Respectfully yours Mary Jane McDonald

From: vinalsmith@eastlink.ca
Sent: Friday, February 14, 2014 11:39 AM
To: MLAallowancesinquiry
Subject: mla saleries and pensions

To whom it may concern I feel if these people are truly interested in helping the people they represent they should be willing to have the same set up for pensions as the normal working joe.As far as wages for the job they do,this should be part of the election process ,a proposall put forth just before the election and let the people decide weither or not you get a raise.No other group ,that I know of gets to set there own wage schedule.This is my opnion. vinal smith

From: Jamil El-Hindi <jelhindi@yahoo.ca>
Sent: Friday, February 14, 2014 12:12 PM
To: MLAallowancesinquiry
Subject: MLA's Pensions

Dear Sirs,

Please think long and hard about the appx. \$14 Billion deficit our good Province has today and growing while you sit in your tax payer funded offices. How many hard working Nova Scotians working for \$10,\$11,\$12,\$13,\$14,\$15 an hour has the kind of pension you have? Fair is fair. Nobody begrudges the long hard hours required of a sitting MLA but you are very well paid for your public service to our Province. Why not rein in your gold plated pensions that are paid for on the backs of Nova Scotians working for \$10,\$11,\$12,\$13,\$14,\$15 an hour? Seriously.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

Jamil El-Hindi
New Glasgow,NS

From: Helen T <thompsh@hotmail.com>
Sent: Friday, February 14, 2014 12:18 PM
To: MLAallowancesinquiry
Subject: MLA Pensions

It is my firm belief as a taxpayer that MLA pensions should be the same as private sector pensions and as low as possible. My pension is not indexed and is very low. I worked harder than any MLA has all my life. Why should they be rewarded for nothing and regular citizens have to pay for their benefits. They need to earn their pensions and pay for at least half their pensions as the private sector does.

There is no golden goose to pay for all these benefits. Taxpayers cannot afford the luxuries given to civil servants, politicians and welfare recipients.

TIME TO STOP ABUSING TAXPAYERS.

Helen Thompson
108-549 Washmill Lake Drive
Halifax NS

From: hewkjen@ns.sympatico.ca
Sent: Friday, February 14, 2014 12:34 PM
To: MLAallowancesinquiry
Subject: MLA Pensions

Dear Sir or Madam:

As a senior on a fixed income and receiving the huge OAS increase of 55 cents I, along with my wife, am appalled at the overly generous pension plan of Nova Scotia MLAs. There are many Nova Scotians who are having a hard time making ends meet and some who do not make ends meet while our MLAs are basking in an overly generous pension plan that they are able to collect at age 55 while many have to work for 20 or more years, in comparison to MLAs, cannot collect their meager pension until age 65.

It is no wonder that there are many in Nova Scotia who have no faith in politicians.

Thank you,

W. Keith & Harriet E. Jenereaux

From: Ivan Pelletier <ivan.pelletier@ns.sympatico.ca>
Sent: Friday, February 14, 2014 12:48 PM
To: MLAallowancesinquiry

Ref: MLA pensions, should be based on the same system as the military who are employed by the people/government .
Based on years served.

From: Helen MacMillan <hmacmillan70@gmail.com>
Sent: Friday, February 14, 2014 1:31 PM
To: MLAallowancesinquiry
Subject: Thoughts

The Federal government just adjusted the public health care plan contributions for retired federal employees and their families citing unfairness because they (the FED) were paying more than 50%

The same should be true for MLA pensions. It is grossly unfair that the public is paying for the MLA pensions on a 22:1 ratio.

The irony is many people paying won't even have a pension themselves even with both husband and wife working.

So if the federal government can change rules so should the people of Nova Scotia. Reduce the overly lucrative MLA pension contribution to a 50/50 basis.

Helen MacMillan

From: Annette Veasey <annette.veasey@xcountry.tv>
Sent: Friday, February 14, 2014 2:03 PM
To: MLAallowancesinquiry
Cc: Leslie Wade; Duncan Veasey; Raven Dawn; Pauline Raven; warren peck; Al / Linda; Alex Torres; Achal Mishra; Alex Rhineland; Alissa Cue; christopher.killacky@acadiau.ca; Charlie Hamm; Diana Church; Legacy Equestrian Centre; Marilyn Cameron; gailmark; susan Dworkin
Subject: MLA pensions

Dear Sir/Madam

That MLA's have allowed themselves to be given \$22 dollars from taxpayers for each dollar they contribute to their individual pension is so dishonest that it is morally bankrupt. Our Country and our Provinces are in debt and do not have the reserves to fund the pensions of the future that the current MLA scheme aims to provide.

Politicians and public servants are trying to engage the public but are seeing record levels of voters turning away from politics. Perhaps one of the many reasons, but one which should make individual taxpayers feel put upon and abused is the current MLA pension scheme.

I would ask you to please have the good sense to see what is happening and stop this greedy nonsense now for the sake of our children's futures.

We are grateful for the opportunity to voice our opinion.
Annette Veasey

From: Tracey W <tracey9336@gmail.com>
Sent: Friday, February 14, 2014 2:08 PM
To: MLAallowancesinquiry
Subject: MLA Pension Review

Please please please -- if you have any ability to right the atrocities that have been leveled against Canadian taxpayers in the form of gold-plated MLA pensions, I urge you to use your power for good, protect the people, not the politicians. Canadians deserve much better! We're seeing our municipalities collapsing under the financial burdens of these pensions. It is time to stop the abuse.

MLA pensions should operate the same as any other, one dollar contributed for one dollar contributed. Nothing more.

Tracey Whyte
Concerned and fed-up resident of HRM

From: RoseBill Blagdon <rosebill21@gmail.com>
Sent: Friday, February 14, 2014 2:16 PM
To: MLAllowancesinquiry
Subject: Fair treatment for Tax payers

Good Day;

I don't get upset about many things, but, when I read of the very unfair treatment we taxpayers get as compared to MLA's my blood pressure goes sky high. Why should MLA's get such Royal treatment and at the same time put it to us?

There is only one RIGHT thing to do when it comes to pensions and many many other things and that is treat everyone the same. Why is that such a difficult thing for the MLA's to do?

--

Bill Blagdon

From: Janet Scharf <jdscharf@eastlink.ca>
Sent: Friday, February 14, 2014 2:52 PM
To: MLAallowancesinquiry
Subject: MLAs pensions!

As usual, politicians with their hands in the taxpayers' pockets. One day we'll be drained dry - then what will you do?

Janet Scharf
jdscharf@eastlink.ca

From: Kathleen Henderson <kathen@seasidehighspeed.com>
Sent: Friday, February 14, 2014 3:22 PM
To: MLAallowancesinquiry
Subject: MLA pensions

The time has come to bring MLA and all government representative's salaries and pensions into line with the reality that the rest of Nova Scotians and Canadians have to live with. I cannot think of one thing that MLAs do during their employment with/for the province that could possibly entitle them to the outrageous pension plan that they have had for so very long. The average Nova Scotian and Canadian are lucky if they have any employer supported pension at all and can only look forward to a retirement at 65 – 67 with a meagre Canada Pension and Old Age Security pension. This inequality between average Canadians and our government representatives cannot be condoned, continued or supported by the tax payers who pay their salaries and pensions long after their own deaths – it must be stopped now.

Sincerely, Kathleen Henderson. 306 Woodside Rd., Dean, Nova Scotia. B0N 2M0.

From: donrioux01@eastlink.ca
Sent: Friday, February 14, 2014 4:15 PM
To: MLAallowancesinquiry
Subject: [PROBABLE-SPAM] MLA PENSIONS

This has to be changed to reflect today's economy. We have seniors who have to decide whether they eat or freeze to death. There are very few pension plans that you don't get equal amounts paid in for what is contributed by the worker. Make the MLA pension plan the same as all the others in the private sector.
Don Rioux

From: Dale McIsaac <dalemcisaac@eastlink.ca>
Sent: Friday, February 14, 2014 5:34 PM
To: MLAallowancesinquiry
Subject: MLA pensions

Dear Committee Members,

Please help Nova Scotians!

We hear that MLAs have a pension plan where they contribute \$1 for every \$22 contributed by the taxpayers of Nova Scotia. That is quite ridiculous!

My wife and I are taxpayers. We have lived in, and worked in Nova Scotia for 37 years and raised two boys. Neither of us have a private pension plan. We are both self employed. We penny pinch, save where we can, and contribute to our RRSPs. The MLA pension plan needs to be brought back to reality, to reflect the real economic conditions in Nova Scotia. By the way, both boys had to leave this province to find meaningful employment opportunities.

Thank you for your help!

Dale

Dale McIsaac P.Ag.
PO Box 217
Amherst, NS B4H 3Z2
902.669.1777 (c)
902.667.0884 (f)

"Enjoy yourself, it is later than you think". -Chinese Proverb

From: Michael Concannon <Concannon@eastlink.ca>
Sent: Friday, February 14, 2014 6:32 PM
To: MLAallowancesinquiry
Subject: MLA pensions

We object very strongly indeed about the existing system for MLA pensions, particularly our contribution of \$22 to these pensions when the recipient only puts in \$1.0.

Also retirement age should be the same as that of the general public.

The Canadian Taxpayers Federation must be taken very seriously, this is supposed to be a Democratic Country.

Yours sincerely,

Michael Concannon,

East Petpeswick.

From: Bernice & Byron <bbtaylor@eastlink.ca>
Sent: Friday, February 14, 2014 7:52 PM
To: MLAallowancesinquiry
Subject: MLAs in general

Surely the MLAs serving our province want to show the electorate that they understand that we are in deep trouble with the debt accumulated over the years. I realize that it is not entirely their fault but they do have the responsibility to take action. If they show that they are willing to reduce their exorbitant pension plan it will help us believe they are sincere. The lucky voters in Nova Scotians who have a pension probably worked 30 to 40 years to realize a pension worth 50% of their annual salary that is much lower than a MLA's salary.

I believe that the MLAs currently elected will accept your recommendation to lower their allowances in general and to take their pension plan to the level of Ontario's which I believe to be dollar for dollar. Thank you, Byron Taylor
Old Barns, NS
B6I 1K1

From: Rob .. <robmcginley@hotmail.com>
Sent: Friday, February 14, 2014 8:52 PM
To: MLAllowancesinquiry
Subject: MLA Allowance

This is criminal
22.00 for 1.00 !!

There should be an inquiry and charges should be laid for those people that voted for such a bill to be passed that steals moneys from tax payers.

Why is it that Nova Scotia is well known for its cur upped Governments? 22.00 for 1.00 is just one reason... There is plenty more...

Give your heads a shake, this is theft.....

Not much wonder voter turn outs are so low.....

Rob McGinley

Sent from my iPad

From: Richard Ford... <rjfwoodturner@gmail.com>
Sent: Friday, February 14, 2014 11:51 PM
To: MLAllowancesinquiry
Subject: MLA pensions

The current gold plated MLA pension plan must be removed it is repugnant and totally unfair to the taxpayers. It is just wrong.

The only acceptable plan is a defined contribution plan where up to a limit (say 8% percentage of the MLA's salary) the taxpayers will pay in an amount equal to the MLA's contribution. This is to be invested in an RRSP of the MLA's choice.

A Concerned Taxpayer.

Richard Ford...

From: Correeni . <correen@gmail.com>
Sent: Saturday, February 15, 2014 4:17 PM
To: MLAallowancesinquiry
Subject: scrap the current MLA pension plan!!

Good afternoon,

While I realize that this submission is late, I still want to submit my comments.

Being a single, 34 year old female living in NS my whole life and always working in the private sector, specifically now at an investment/insurance brokerage firm, I have to say that these facts about the current NS MLA pension plan are offensive and frustrating!!
A change MUST come, and the sooner, the better - for this province.

I am not saying that these public servants don't work hard, but I AM saying that I also work hard, probably harder in some cases.

I would NEVER expect taxpayers to help me fund MY retirement plan, and would be hard-pressed to ever accept a government job which so UNFAIRLY OVER-compensates their employees, compared to what private sector employees receive from their employers.

I don't expect my employer to do more, they do plenty - what I am saying is that these MLAs have had it far too good for far too long, and they know it. As all civil servants in this province do! Earned days off?? indexed pension plans?? taxpayers making up the shortfall in their pension plans when they don't look after their pension plans and their performance in the market?

I watched many clients in our office throughout these handful of years since 2008 distraught and ruined by the market..... not too many public servants had much to worry about.

INSULTING!!!!

What is so frustrating is that in this province with so many skeletons in the closet, endless expense scandals, and past politicians at every level expecting that these are their rights, that they've done nothing wrong, that they are entitled to their entitlements so many people are just willing to not speak up and voice their concerns.

Changes need to start NOW; this province is not heading in a great direction, and with an aging population, why would any young person think NS a great place to live? we pay some of the highest taxes as taxpayers, and why? so we can pay these MLAs for doing their stint for 5 years?

Give me a break! LITERALLY! A tax break!!!! So much money on my T4 going towards taxes, and we're expected to accept that for every \$1 an MLA contributes, WE contribute \$22? I wish someone were doing THAT for MY retirement!

Thank you for reviewing this pension plan, and I do look forward to the results and hope that for NS' future, a complete scrapping of this current structure is done NOW.

Regards,

Correen Lynch

From: David Secord <dave.secord@ns.sympatico.ca>
Sent: Sunday, February 16, 2014 7:33 AM
To: MLAallowancesinquiry
Subject: Pensions

22 to1 this is ridicules, no one deserves this type of pension. Certainly not an MLA in NS, where not even the Premier has any real authority to in act positive change in this Debt ridden province.

Dollar for dollar is all anyone deserves, and this idiocy of retirement at 55, again more then any citizen could ever wish for.

I truly hope this committee is really listening to the public.

If any one in government wanted to make real change in this province, then start using the only real true democratic device, a plebiscite. Should be easier to use such a tool with the ease of putting in computer voting, and don't use the excuse about hacking etc.

David Secord

From: nspiper@eastlink.ca
Sent: Sunday, February 16, 2014 8:14 AM
To: MLAallowancesinquiry
Subject: Proposed MLA Pension Plan

To Whom It May Concern:

I am writing to show my support for the proposed MLA Pension Plan that would scrap the gold plated MLA pension plan currently in place and replace it with a program that for every dollar contributed by a politician, the government would match it and both would be invested in RRSPs. How things have gotten so out of hand with the entitlements politicians enjoy at the taxpayers expense is something that needs to be rectified and their pension plan is an excellent place to start.

Respectfully,

Stephanie Guglielmone
174 Hwy 329 RR 2
Hubbards, NS B0J1T0

From: A L <littlea1@hotmail.ca>
Sent: Sunday, February 16, 2014 9:25 AM
To: MLAallowancesinquiry
Subject: MLA pensions

These pension plans are ridiculous!!!!. I have no idea how any intelligent, mature, honest person could possibly defend these pensions. Add on to that their huge salaries, perks, expense accounts etc. It is literally robbery and needs to stop NOW!!!.

For every 1\$ that the "MLA" puts in the public should match that 1\$ and no more. They should NOT be eligible for a pension until they are at least 67, the same age as the old age security has been changed to.

Why on Earth should they be able to collect gold plated pensions at 55 when regular hard working people have to wait till 67 to collect a tiny, barely liveable amount of money?.

They should not be eligible for any pension until they have served 2 FULL terms as MLA....5 Years for a gold plated pension????..really??.....really??...

We need to get rid of the politicians who just enter politics for the pensions, perks, expense account. We need people from all parts of society who actually WANT to be a politician and want to represent their districts, not just represent their party leaders. Having nothing but lawyers, doctors and wealthy business people in politics is not benefiting the average person, it is simply benefiting the already well off and wealthy.

Today people are much more aware of what the "politicians" have been up to and we are tired of it. Don't you get it?. Time to bring these self serving people and their gold plated pensions back down to Earth.

Please show us that your group is made up of intelligent, level-headed, mature, realistic people who are willing to properly do the job that has been put before you. Please do not be just another group of yes men and woman for the politicians. PLEASE STAND UP FOR THE PEOPLE. IT IS ALSO YOU CHILDREN AND GRANDCHILDREN THAT ARE STUCK PAYING THESE "MLA"S PENSIONS. SHOW YOU HAVE A BRAIN AND A SPINE.

LET THE "MLA'S SULK AND CRY ALL THEY WANT. THEY ARE WELCOME FIND WORK ELSEWHERE.

From: Michael Nemec <michael_nemec@yahoo.ca>
Sent: Sunday, February 16, 2014 11:27 AM
To: MLAallowancesinquiry
Cc: atlantic.director@taxpayer.com
Subject: MLA pensions

To whom it may concern:

it is time to align elected politicians' pension with the reality of pensions of the rest of us. Aside of CPP and OSA, we are required to supplement our retirement resources with RRSP scheme. No one adds to that option but the individual, and certainly not as generously as the electorate is forced to do for NS MLAs pensions. With running deficits, the provincial debt, desperate economic situation in most of Nova Scotia (except, of course, in Halifax area), and outflow of population (esp. younger generation), as NS Government is inept in keeping our young people employed, the remaining population of Nova Scotia cannot afford to subsidize politicians' gold-plated pensions to the present degree.

Therefore, I propose to reduce the subsidy to 1:1 ratio (taxpayers match politicians' contribution-dollar for dollar), and that the pension for each MLA be in form of that individual's RRSP, as the rest of us have to contend with. Thus, no guarantees of stability. To keep the pension guaranteed at same level (and even worse, to index it to inflation) becomes, again, a taxpayers' liability. A luxury the rest of us do not enjoy.

It is with dismay we see that the politicians view the taxpayers as their subservients who are there to provide for politicians' wants. This is all without public input. It should be, finally, realized that the politicians are employees of the public and not the other way around. The public should have a say on the politicians' pay, and when there is to be a raise in their compensation, the public should be asked as an employee must ask an employer.

In present situation, it is no wonder there are financial scandals involving MLAs and public purse. The generous compensation and an easy access to unlimited public funds attract either unscrupulous people, or corrupts newcoming politicians. The system is not working and there needs to be a reform.

Yours truly,

Michael František Němec

From: Marilyn Cameron <maricam@eastlink.ca>
Sent: Sunday, February 16, 2014 12:06 AM
To: MLAallowancesinquiry
Subject: MLA Pensions

Dear Sirs/Madams: Thank you for this opportunity to voice my opinion about how should think about MLA's pension income following the completion of their term(S) in office.

Firstly, it is important to realize that far too many Nova Scotia's can not afford to save sufficient funds that will provide them with a decent standard of living when they retire - despite working very hard for most of the years of their adult lives. Far too many self-employed persons do not have adequate retirement savings set aside either. This fact undoubtedly worries economists when they wonder how we are going to afford to supplement the income of so many unpensioned elderly persons in the near future. Should we expect our government to keep us all at the standard of living we feel we deserve if can't do it for ourselves?

I am old enough to recall a time when elected MLA's performed the duties of their office because of their desire to serve the public and to try to make our province a better place to live and work rather than just doing so in order to earn substantial incomes while in office - plus have their expenses and their retirements paid for on the backs of Nova Scotia's - as it happens today. For me, it was a hard pill to swallow when I learned that MLA's make approximately \$30,000 more per year than a full time starting veterinarian who has had 8 years of university training to achieve their professional status. I don't know of any veterinarian who has a pension fund paid for by their employer. The veterinarian must see to their own RRSP contributions. I work very hard at my profession, but still find it a challenge to put any extra funds away each month towards my retirement! Ditto for our farmers and many, many more hard working Nova Scotians who feel like I do.

I really do not know what is going to happen to all of us who can't seem to save enough money for our futures. But why should MLA's expect to be treated any different than the rest of us - especially at a rate of \$22 from taxpayers for every \$1 of MLA input? Unacceptable!

I do not wish to support retirement funding for MLA's using tax dollars. Their annual income provides them with a very generous wage - from which they can make their own contributions to a RRSP if they want to. In addition, it hardly seems fair to provide MLA's with any retirement benefits when very few seem to accomplish anything meaningful or affect real change during their term in office anyway. Many MLA's only make for one term in office. It is one thing to promise things while campaigning about what they want to do while in office, but it is quite another to make those promises happen once they get elected. I guess we can thank all those high-paid bureaucrats behind the scenes for that, can't we?

Thanks for considering the views of a really tired-of-being-abused taxpayer.

Dr. Marilyn Cameron, DVM
Grafton, Nova Scotia

From: rma.nwa@ns.sympatico.ca
Sent: Sunday, February 16, 2014 7:10 PM
To: MLAallowancesinquiry
Subject: MLA PENSIONS

Good evening . MLA's get a pretty good living just by getting voted in . As a tax payer , the present pension plan , for me , doesn't work . I believe it has to be " dollar for dollar " . WHY ? Because this is more fair . Also , if MLA's can get a full pension at age 55 , why can't I as a tax payer ? That's not right . Books can be balanced alot easier if pensions and MLA's expenses are under control . If I as a tax payer have to be under control for expenses then why does a MLA think they don't have to ? To balance books you have to not just change the pension but you have to : get rid of the legislature sitting fee of \$38 per day just for sitting in a seat , reduce housing expenses that MLA's can claim by 40 % (if it costs more for the MLA to rent the place he/she has , then it's up to the MLA to make up the difference and they can't get credit for it at tax payers expense) , reduce per km rate down to \$0.20 per km , wage freeze for the next 3 yrs , reduce meal allowances by 50 % , if you commit a crime during office you need to use a second chance view (or otherwords if you admit you did something wrong then you would only lose your pension by a certain % such as 20% but if you reoffend then you lose your pension) and reduce budgets for misc. uses .

This would be a start , but it's up to MLA's to do this . MLA's need to take the lead instead of taking advantage of us tax payers . The gas tax and HST are too high . The HST needs to go back to 13% and the gas tax needs to go back 3 cents (but even with this , other provinces are still cheaper such PEI and NB) . Don't allow the world's elite to dictate to us . Every MLA has a role to play and that role is to promote NS the best they can . Get away from being politically correct and playing political games in behind the scenes . Show Nova Scotians that , you the MLA , will do the right thing and consider every point that was made here . If not , then more people will not vote in future elections even though it's a priviledge and a right .

Thanks for your time and God Bless :) , Norman A of Lockeport N.S.

From: Brian Burgess <brian.burgess@yahoo.ca>
Sent: Monday, February 17, 2014 8:00 AM
To: MLAallowancesinquiry
Subject: MLA pensions - no more gold plated program

Good morning

MLA's serving the public should receive no more pension than is available to private citizens.

No one else receives any amount of benefit after only 5 years, so if MLA's do, it should be pro-rated to the length of service. In other words they should get a benefit based on 5 years worth of service the same as anyone else would, which is minimal in non-government employment.

The same reasoning goes for contribution. People these days are lucky to have a funded program. Most have a contribution matching RRSP system that we have to use a 1 vehicle to move our savings forward. MLA's should be no different.

Thank you
Brian Burgess- Concerned citizen

From: Clarey Murphy <murphyclarey@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, February 17, 2014 8:09 AM
To: MLAllowancesinquiry
Subject: pensions

lets get back to reality and make the pensions more in line with the rest of the people. were broke and cant afford these golden hand outs

From: Sue B <rapunzelle@hotmail.com>
Sent: Monday, February 17, 2014 2:18 PM
To: MLAallowancesinquiry
Subject: MLA pension plan

Reform is needed. Drastic reform is needed. \$22 of my hard-earned money goes towards MLA pensions with their contribution of just \$1. That's truly disgusting. This must be reformed so that my contribution is no more than each MLA's contribution. My contribution should really be LESS for a truly fair solution. I contribute 50 cents, MLAs contribute a dollar. Reform this now before Nova Scotia goes bankrupt trying to keep up with these outrageous pension plans.

Susan Brownrigg
Mt. Denson, NS

To whom it may concern

I am on a fixed income like majority of Nova Scotians. My pension income from N.S. Prov. Gov't is \$8,000 yearly. If you want to play fair then give us all the same increase so I can improve my standard of living, everybody and every situation talks about equality - what does it mean? Why not start with pension and then we could start living in a democratic society. Don't ask for fairness / equality for all.

Thank you

Betty Murphy.

477-3782

50 Spruce Hill

148x B3 N3 P5

Jan 24/14

January 26, 2014.

Fred LeBlanc
503-5885 Cunard St.
Halifax, N.S.
B3K 1E3 - 423-6190.

MLA Remuneration Review Panel.
c/o The Chief Clerks Office.
1st Floor, Province House.
P.O. Box 1617.
Halifax, N.S. B3J 2V3.

Re: MLA allowance Inquiry;
To Whom it may Concern.

In response to article in Chronicle Herald, Sat. Jan. 25.
concerning "Public's Views Sought on Pay for MLAs"
MLAs are writing the laws to suit themselves. All their pay
and allowances are the perks they and their families have
enjoyed for years. MLA should work for the same pensions
that everyone else has to work for most of their working life.
why should MLAs set their own rules. All the rich and
politicians have a sense of entitlement that they should be able
break the laws and get away with it and the average person
should go to jail. MLA have past laws where EI Recipients
have to pay back 30% if they make a certain amount. They pass
the laws pretty quickly to screw up the working man. Why can't
the average worker get the same benefits as the MLA. Will they
pass these laws as quickly as perks for themselves. The MLA are
working for us not themselves. All the public should be made
aware we can call them 24-7 as many times and it is
not harassment.

I demand the MLA work 15 years in politics before they
are eligible for a pension, pay for their own housing,
travel and be able to write it off on their taxes as the
average working man. If charges occur, we will see the
deadbeat MLA get out of politics. Put a ceiling on pensions
for all present and past MLAs.

Fred LeBlanc.

30 January 2014-01-30

Re: MLA Raises and Pensions.

I am a senior who still has to work to make ends meet and I am outraged our recent elected officials want to give themselves a 20% raise and lucrative pension. The majority of seniors in this province have no pension plans other than the CPP and OAP.

How are the populace expected to pay for all this lavishness they are not benefiting anything from.

This extra money could be put to better use on say better Health Care. Especially now that people outside of Halifax County are expected to pay more for their services.

MLAs should be in a public Service Sector pension plan and get out of what they put into it and wait until; age 65 to get it.

I'm beginning to think we can't afford this Liberal Government.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Bob Culver', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Bob Culver
Amherst, Nova Scotia

Feb . 2 2014

MLA Remuneration Review Panel
c/o The Chief Clerk's Office
1st Floor, Province House
P.O.Box 1617.
Halifax ,N.S.

To:

Roy Salmon , Janet Hazelton and John Merrick ,

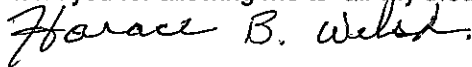
Having spent thirty-six years working at a pulpmill, supporting a large family. I paid into a pension fund expecting to retire with a good pension and be able to live comfortable. Unlike the people of Liverpool and other Industries when our plant (Stora Forest Industries) went bankrupt I along with other fellow employees lost close to 40% of my pension which makes for unforeseen hardships.

When you see our MLA's, such as Darrell Dexter, give themselves such rich pensions plus severance packages and all the goodies they squandered over the years, well it makes me ill. We wonder why there is only a 60% turn out on Election Day ,we need wonder no more. The sad part of this is I along with other people do not expect any better from Steven Mc Neil. He will take his turn at the trough and walk away with his large pension, which is like a "Set for life" lottery. We had the chance for change with Jamie Baillie and we did not have the sense to vote him in as Premier of Nova Scotia.

Question, Why would Darryl Dexter want a recount on his close election loss, when he can earn get 132000.00 when retired and 130000.00 as premier...can someone explain that to me ?

What I would like to see is a review of the Premier's performance after two years and the power given to the Auditor General to remove the Premier from office if deemed that the Premier is not doing what he promised to do .The promises are what we vote for.

Thank you for allowing me to air my thoughts.



Horace Welsh
7055 RR#1
Mulgrave
Nova Scotia
B0E 2G0

Phone 1-902-747-2555

MLA Remuneration Review Panel
c/o The Chief Clerk's Office
1st Floor, Province House
P.O. Box 1617
Halifax, Nova Scotia
B3J 2Y3

RE: PAY FOR MLAs

Dear Review Panel

As a NS senior trying to stretch my pension to make ends meet, I am outraged that the average salary for an MLA is almost \$90,000. To compound this, upon retirement, or displacement, they are given a transition allowance of approximately one month's salary per year of service and another \$7,500 for retirement or career. And let us not forget the MLAs will also be receiving Old Age Security and the Canada Pension.

These dollar amounts are too, too much, considering that 60% of Nova Scotians have no pension whatsoever.

Why aren't the pensions of the MLAs aligned with the regular folks' pensions? Maybe if their yearly salaries, pensions and all the other pluses were scaled to the average wage earnings of the populace, and governed by frugality, we, the voters, would know that we are voting for someone who actually wants to be of help to this province instead of someone who smugly sits around knowing that they too, have a secured place at the feeding trough.

These amounts for salaries and pensions beg the question: How do I become an MLA? Don't worry, I'll not be on the books too long; I'm old and the Fates could snip my line of life at any time.

Mr. Salmon, Ms. Hazelton, and Mr. Merrick, please take the time to listen to all input and read all submissions about this dilemma.

I am a believer in re-cycling:

REDUCE THE WASTE

Yours truly



B. Clarke
Amherst, Nova Scotia

February 3, 2014

MLA Remuneration Review Panel:

Dear Madam and Sirs:

The amount of money the taxpayer has had to fork out for the MLA pensions vis-a-vis the MLA's contribution of 1 dollar for 6 of my money, should be one of the major changes for you to consider.

They should contribute at least 50% toward their pension.

Respectfully,

Aet Sandström
(Mrs. Aet Sandström)
29 Pleasant St.
Dartmouth, NS

Feb 4, 2014
192 Queen St.
N.S.
B2N2B3

The MLA Remuneration
Review Panel
For The Province of N.S.

Greetings,

I welcome the opportunity to share my views with you.

No disrespect intended, but I would respectfully suggest that in the future consideration be given to increasing the membership of your panel.

Add four additional people from the rank and file of ordinary citizens in our province, who earn today's average wage of roughly \$45,000 annually, who know how to raise a family, live within their budget and continue to make the most contribution to the life, work, growth and culture of our province.

By not having this balance on your present panel, makes it lopsided and unrepresentative of the majority of Nova Scotians

Secondly, I would respectfully suggest that in order to reflect the average salary scale that presently exists for ordinary workers in our province that you consider reducing the existing MLA salaries with the following paradigm.

Let MLA salaries be made up of the existing average annual salary for ordinary hard working Nova Scotians, say \$45,000 plus half that amount (\$22,500) for a total basic salary of \$67,500.

Additional perks such as, travel meals, living accommodations etc be covered by an additional 25% of their basic salary (\$16,875), this would bring the total remuneration for an MLA to \$84,375.

Furthermore, let this total remuneration for the next five years be increased only by what average workers in Nova Scotia receive. Let us say 2%.

Thirdly, I would suggest that henceforth MLA pensions be modeled after the present Public Service Plan and not the existing gold plated plan where the ordinary tax payers (and not the politicians) pay toward their pensions.

In closing, let me say that politicians must begin to lead by example and not by what they consider are their entitlements. If they don't, our existing bankruptcy will drown all of us.

I remain,
Respectfully yours
David N. MacNaughton

APPENDIX E

February 12, 2014

PRESENTERS:

John Kitz

Kevin Lacey

Gary Foran

HANSARD

NOVA SCOTIA MLA REMUNERATION REVIEW

Wednesday, February 12, 2014

RED CHAMBER

MLA REMUNERATION REVIEW PANEL

Mr. Roy Salmon, Chairman
Ms. Janet Hazelton
Mr. John Merrick, Q.C.

WITNESSES

Mr. John Kitz, Burnside Realty
Mr. Kevin Lacey, Canadian Taxpayers Federation
Mr. Gary Foran

In Attendance:

Mr. Neil Ferguson
Chief Clerk

Ms. Annette Boucher
Assistant Clerk

HALIFAX, WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 12, 2014

MLA REMUNERATION REVIEW PANEL

2:00 P.M.

CHAIRMAN
Mr. Roy Salmon

MR. CHAIRMAN: Good afternoon, ladies and gentlemen. I will call the meeting to order. I am very pleased that so many of you came out this afternoon to give us your advice and help us with our task as we proceed to issue a report by March 31st. That is our intention.

Without further ado, I'll call on the first presenter who is Mr. John Kitz from Burnside Realty. As I understand it, we are looking at a 15-minute time period for the presentation and our questions. Thank you very much. Mr. Kitz.

MR. JOHN KITZ: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. It's always a joy for all of us to be in this room for any purpose; you feel elevated by the grandeur of it all. I wanted to come forward because it seemed to me that this is not the first time the panel has been asked to look at pay for MLAs in the province and there's a certain amount of frustration that you must be feeling because you would be repeating the advice of earlier groups who have said there are some problems here and then the politicians are afraid to run with it because they don't want to pay them more because of the political pushback. It has been turned down in this run-around and although I wasn't on the ground when the first kind of pay/pension package was put out a generation ago, I can imagine that it was a very similar conversation, that nobody wanted to pay big bucks because it's hard to sell. So the somewhat generous - certainly by today's standards, very generous - pension provisions would have been put in to try to make for a balance. I'm making this up, I'm not an expert, I wasn't there, but it makes sense having watched the political life of the province all of my life.

There are some changes in the 30-odd years since this pay package was first devised. As I said earlier, the public sector pensions which didn't catch people's attention years ago now, of course, are political hot potatoes right across the board and so the MLA pension which is even apparently more generous catches more attention. Rather than churning over that which has been chewed up a lot, I was trying to figure out where we might address the public good.

I come at this with no particular expertise. As a student I worked half-time as an EA for a minister in the province. In those days there were more part-timers than there are now. I've been a constituency president, Liberal, so I've been aware of people looking at running and some of the kinds of thoughts that go through their minds, but that's all I'm bringing forward. I'm impressed, surprised frankly, at how good the candidates are that come forward that I know, that I see here in Halifax, so we're getting good people. But I want to talk about some good people who do not, cannot, see themselves as MLAs and what some of the reasons for that are, and wondering if that is in the public good. As I say, I'm kind of going back here looking a little bit at what I perceive has changed since the salary/pension deal was first brought in a generation ago.

After all, the purpose of remuneration is to attract talent to encourage new blood to enter politics. It is pretty easy to say - you can make a good argument that the salaries should all be doubled. An MLA makes what an articulated clerk makes at a big law firm on Bay Street, a Cabinet Minister makes what a first-year associate makes at a big Bay Street law firm. You can always pull numbers if you're trying to justify salaries. That's not going to happen, it would be shot down, the politics of it are not worth really discussing. I'm not suggesting that Bay Street law firms are, in fact, a sensible link, I'm just saying it's easy enough to pull numbers and make arguments.

Looking at how Nova Scotians can become members of the Legislature, there is quite a - I mean, obviously you've got to get a nomination and you've got to win, otherwise it's just bad luck, bad timing, bad use of your energies, but coming from different backgrounds, people's positions are quite different. Obviously, the easiest of all is to be a teacher in Nova Scotia in the public school system; you can take time off from your job, your job is protected, you've got certain rights and a pension. I don't know the details, but clearly that is one extreme of it being pretty damn easy and pretty comfortable. As a matter of fact, MLA pay and teacher pay are comparable.

Until, say, 1980 that was true for lawyers. They could leave a firm and expect to get back to the firm and race to make up, and people would keep a chair warm. It was a sort of the norm growing up that people got in and out of politics from law firms, and that's gone. Nowadays, the legal business has changed; you'd lose all your clients, you'd skip your best earning years, and you might well not be welcomed back with open arms.

It's a changed world and if you look at the kind of cutthroat action at Heenan Blaikie, you can see that it's not a very forgiving one for lawyers trying to slip back into earning big bucks and having the corner office. That's not happening, but lawyers with their knowledge of the law, this may be a skill that you do want to have in the Legislature so I identify them as one group that there are fewer successful lawyers going into politics than there were at one time. Is this a problem? Perhaps yes, perhaps no, but I'm just trying to identify some of the, perhaps not full blockage, but partial blockage that I am perceiving.

Medical doctors, senior health sector administrators - either from medicine or nursing backgrounds, the big picture people - can they easily become MLAs? I don't know that side of the world as well, but similar problems arise - their training gets out of date, their client base is gone; slipping right back into their professional life after half a dozen years in politics, there might be some problems.

When John Savage went into politics, he didn't assume he would have to give up practice absolutely entirely. He did because he became very quickly head of the Party and then later Premier, so he then made that complete switch. Jim Smith did practise for years as an MLA. I truly don't think that was detrimental to either of those gentlemen's ability to serve either their clients, their patients or the province. I do think that since we spend half our budget on health, the ability to attract serious medical people is something that we really want to think about. The people who've studied it and worked successfully in it for 20 years are exactly the kind of people that you should have as MLAs, so if there is anything making that difficult - whether it's pay, working conditions, all the sorts of variables that you are looking at - then these seemed significant to me.

My memory is that there were more people part time in politics than there are now, that this concept that it has to be a full-time job may be detrimental. Again, trying to think of the public interest here and how people who would like to serve can be encouraged to serve for a reasonable length of time.

Let's look at the business community; people who can read a balance sheet and get their head around risks know that \$14 billion in liabilities on less than one million people has meaning, and meaning to them. In a system which increasingly just simply stops your company - whether you own it or work for it - doing business with the province, this has become increasingly difficult. I watched the Premier being raked over the coals for some contract of \$20,000 dollars for his brother and I thought how unhelpful this kind of politics is, and how unhelpful is the drift towards simply forbidding any contact between anybody with any business interests and the political system. It is unnecessary in open bidding with appeal systems already in place.

We've got to find some way to move beyond that because it really makes people who understand the economy of the province a little leery, not just to get egg on their face, but also to compromise their business or their business relations. Certainly from my experience the people coming forward are coming forward as honourable as their title would have you believe. We really should be able to work out rules of blind trust, conflict of interest rules where you do not vote on things which might have any kind of glimmer of touch to anything you might own.

I realize that your terms of reference don't go there, but I just bring it to the attention of the panel as a possible concern and something that again, if we're trying to get in the best and the brightest for reasonable periods of time, get in the blood that you need, that understand the risks and problems of the Province of Nova Scotia, this maybe should

be at least a sort of a go-forward as you sign off March 31st, that this is maybe only to me a problem or it may be a larger problem.

I suppose we have memories of Party contributions for access to government, but that really, I think, belongs to a pre-computer age; now that every expense claim and Party contribution can be on the Web, we really can seek ways to move forward. Again, we're outside of the terms of reference that I understand you have, but any blockage is, I think, relevant.

It's not just about the money people, it's not just about business owners who have corporate lawyers, bankers, accountants, corporate executives with strategic skills. I think what we need are people who automatically think about Plan B when they're being presented with Plan A.

Part of the reason you are here is that some MLAs were venal and it's worth remembering that those were petty, inappropriate office monies spent, living expenses that were dubious, that kind of stuff. It's important in tightening and thinking about those improper expense account problems that we don't cut off real concerns of honourable people trying to run both a business, or have a business to come back to, or be employable after being an MLA and the rules as they are implemented.

All these examples of people who I think might be good MLAs keep bringing me back to one other question - should the job of an MLA be full time, always be full time, necessarily be full time? That's what makes politics in Nova Scotia such a major decision because most people now are treating it that way. Municipal councillors of Halifax even voted that it should be a full-time job. This blocks a whole lot of good people who, frankly, don't think it's that interesting as a full-time job, not being a backbencher, in any case.

I can see that you can't carry on much outside work if you're Premier, Leader of the Opposition, Leader of a major Opposition Party, Minister of Finance, Health, Education, there's an economic portfolio as well probably there where you've got to go and sell the province. After that, I think it's a valid question. Maybe you could limit those people who must be full time, six, eight, 10 people who are on some kind of executive committee, plus these Opposition Leaders and then pay them enough money to live the way the doctor, lawyer, business guy/woman, either is living in Nova Scotia right now, however you want to fix that.

Not all 51 of the MLAs who really, when you look at it - the MLAs and the Cabinet Ministers their take-home pay is really pretty close. (Interruption) Time? Thank you, sir, I will cut. Really those are my points. I think that the only other one I would like to make is about when pensions kick in. I don't think anybody has much problem with them kicking in at 65. I think a lot of the anxiety is about pensions kicking in much earlier, when people are defeated. I would urge you to spend heavy money on making retraining possible for

people who've taken out six or eight years to be in politics, should be expected to be needing major retraining, whether they are accountants, lawyers, Indian Chiefs, whatever.

People are used to moving around in today's workplace, but there's some serious bridge-building that that may require, typically going back to school or changing career direction. I think that's very appropriate support, again to try and get people. I guess this person I'm thinking about is a success with a 20-year career in their chosen field so they are still in their 40s and they've got the piss and vinegar to do this but they should have a life after it. I'm trying to think of how to attract the best and brightest. Thank you very much.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Are there questions from panel members? Thank you very much, Mr. Kitz. We'll turn the floor over to Kevin Lacey. Welcome, Mr. Lacey.

MR. KEVIN LACEY: Thanks for having me. I appreciate you having these public meetings on these important issues. I represent an organization called the Canadian Taxpayers Federation, and we've been appearing before committees much like this one for the past 20 years. We've consistently argued for greater accountability in the entitlements MLAs receive, more transparency in how MLAs spend our money and ensuring no double standards. MLAs should receive no more or no less than the working taxpayers who they work for and pay their bills.

Since the MLA expense scandal broke, MLAs deserve much credit for a lot of the accountability reforms that have gone on, posting expenses on-line and measures like that, but there have not been dramatic reforms in many of the entitlements that go along with it. As a result, I want to speak first to three myths about political compensation.

The first myth that is often talked about is that politicians deserve special benefits because of the long hours of work and the often 24/7 nature of the job. The reality is, in today's world, that many people are working those types of hours. It is true that while politicians are working 40 hours a week to attend events, doing their legislative duties or trying to get re-elected, so are tens of thousands of other Nova Scotians along with them. It is also true that they have low job security, but again so do many of the small business owners who struggle to make their businesses work, against the regulation and high taxes of the government.

The second myth is that paying politicians more means you get more qualified and better individuals. There is absolutely no evidence to support this. As an example, a Nova Scotia MLA earns a fraction of what a federal Member of Parliament would earn, yet I would doubt you'd find any taxpayers who would believe that MPs are better qualified or perform their jobs better thanks fully to their larger paycheques. Taken to the more extreme, State Legislatures in the United States, like the State of Maine, have only part-time congressmen and congresswomen, and the State of New Hampshire has a full volunteer Congress which receives no pay at all. In fact, the only entitlement in New Hampshire is that each congressman has the ability to buy, for \$50, a licence plate to tell

people that they are, in fact, a congressman. Yet again no one would believe that those two systems are worse or better as a result of the compensation system alone. The reality is, salary means very little to the quality of people who are running for public office.

The third myth is that you base entitlements on averages, national averages or standards. I've had the ability in my career to see politics in a lot of different provinces and this ignores the situations of taxpayers in Nova Scotia and does not account for the differences of the responsibilities of a politician in various jurisdictions. They represent different numbers of people, they have different duties, et cetera. To put them all in the same boat and compare them on a national level is foolhardy.

With that said there are five specific recommendations the Taxpayers Federation would like the committee to consider in their final recommendations. The first is that while the pace of change has been swift to make expenses more accountable, special entitlements like pension and benefits that go along with them largely remain untouched.

Since 2010, our organization has been fighting for the reform of the best pension deal in Nova Scotia, the MLA pension program. In our battle to attempt to bring some sanity back to these pensions, we are pleased and salute the previous government for launching a review of the pension system in 2011 and we are pleased with the reduction of 30 per cent for the current sitting MLAs. But these reforms do not even begin to touch this very rich pension program that after the last Legislature remained in place; this has to change.

The pension program is not simply about payouts, it's about fairness. Seventy-seven per cent of Nova Scotians outside of the public sector have no pension at all yet their taxes go to fund these rich MLA pensions for politicians. That is why we would like to see the following reforms in the MLA pension system.

First, to scrap the pension system altogether; replace it with a matching RRSP program that would see the ratio of contributions from its current 22 to 1 ratio to a 1 to 1 ratio, closer to what those in the private sector would receive.

The second is to apply the changes from the Gruchy Commission, and any changes that are made by this commission to not just apply to MLAs serving today, but MLAs who voted for this pension program in 2006 in the first place. There is precedent set for changing these pensions. In the Province of New Brunswick in 2011, MLAs voted to slice their pensions by 33 per cent. Those changes were not just applied to current, sitting MLAs, but also MLAs who were collecting a pension. The New Brunswick Government is now currently going through another revision of the MLA pension program and in this session of the Legislature they promise to put MLAs in what they are referring to as the shared risk pension model which would essentially allow MLAs to be based on the public sector model and rather than guaranteed payouts, those payouts would be based on the health of public sector pension plans, though the legislation hasn't been introduced yet.

This is the second go-round in the past two and a half years on MLA pensions. We believe it's time once and for all to do something about this pension system that is too rich and far out of the reach of taxpayers.

The second is on salaries. It is important to note that while the base salary is around \$90,000 per year, the average Nova Scotia MLA salary is much higher when you take into account all of the extra payments - in fact, well north of \$100,000. Given these salaries, it's time to add some accountability into the pay of politicians and putting in place "pay for performance". Members of Cabinet who run ministries should be accountable for what happens in those ministries and within their departments. That is why we want to follow a British Columbia model, which penalizes ministers who miss spending targets and their own government targets with a 10 per cent salary cut. If the government fails to balance the budget, another 10 per cent salary cut would be implemented. Exceptions could be made in the case of extra spending for things like disaster relief, but our group believes that ensuring that government only spends as much as it takes in, is a basic element of government and why we should add achieving this as part of the pay package.

Right now, the only accountability mechanisms to Nova Scotians is the ability to vote on their local representative every four years. We believe there should be more accountability brought into the system and making Cabinet ministers accountable for the actions of their department would deliver on that.

Next, we would like to see the elimination of the show-up-to-work pay. According to the Members Manual, 2013, on Page 51, it says that both outside and inside members of the Legislature receive \$43 per diem for simply showing up the day the Legislature sits. This amounts to paying MLAs for doing the very job that they were elected by their constituents to do - and, frankly, it's silly. We're not going to balance the budget by this budget measure, but it's a matter of principle that politicians who are elected to attend the Legislature don't receive extra payment as a result of doing just that.

Third, change of the travel allowances. An MLA is considered an outside member if their riding is just 40 kilometres from this very place in the Legislature. That is about a 20-minute commute. Most people now are doing much more than that in their own lives, than simply the 20 minutes, and this should be reformed to reflect it.

We also would like to see the commission examine the rates which we pay outside members for apartments. The recent report in Newfoundland and Labrador concluded that it was cheaper for members to rent hotel rooms when they were required to be in the capital rather than renting apartments. Just some quick math - we pay about \$1,500 per month for a member's apartment and we allow \$153 for a hotel room. That's about \$18,000 per year without including the expenses of an MLA's apartment. That would equal, at the \$153 rate, of about 117 nights of a hotel. I would defy the commission to find members who are

spending 117 nights in Halifax. I would also say if they are spending 117 nights in Halifax, then that should be examined as well.

Lastly, we want to see a change in the way the salaries are set. We fought since 2010 to have a citizens committee examine the pay and benefits of politicians - a commission that would have a cross-section of Nova Scotians from many places with individuals that would reflect those things. We believe that committee should sit before an election, not after, so that politicians are then afforded to know what the deal is before they decide to run for public office.

In conclusion, let me say we've come a long way on expenses and with transparency; both the politicians and the government deserve a lot of credit for that. But we still have a long way to go on entitlements, and that is the crux of our presentation today.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you very much. Questions, fellow members? Okay, thank you Mr. Lacey.

Our third presenter is Gary Foran.

MR. GARY FORAN: Now I'd like to read from my brief, but there are some comments along the way that I'll just make that aren't in there. My comments will be my comments.

I, too, would like to thank the committee for giving the public the opportunity to express their viewpoints or comments with regard to MLAs pensions. Our MLAs deserve an increase in salary and they should get one. However, the traditional way of giving them raises should be changed to reflect the realities of today and future generations.

The current system of giving MLAs a percentage increase should be abolished and replaced with a more transparent system that is fair to sitting members, a process that reflects the realities of everyday life of our citizens, a process that puts in place a fixed cost for years to come. Therefore I would like to recommend our MLAs receive their compensation based on an hourly rate system.

Converting to an hourly rate system is a simple process. You divide your current salary which we now know is \$89,000 and change, by the standard hours per year worked which is 2,080, then you divide that by 40 and it comes out to \$42.90 an hour is what our current MLAs are making. That is just their base salary, that's not counting any of the other things they might make money for.

As I stated earlier, our MLAs should receive a raise. Their current rate of \$42.90 should be increased to an amount equal to \$47 per hour. Such an increase would take their annual salary to \$97,760 - and if I may, Mr. Chairman, when you look at it that basically

comes out to about 9 per cent. When I look at the 9 per cent it looks over the top, but when you look that there was no wage in 2013, there currently is none presently and when I continue with my document I'm saying there's a further four years before another raise. When you look and do the math, I'm saying the 9 per cent would be basically over a six year period and then I'll qualify that as I go forward.

This is an increase of \$8,526 per member, per year. That total amount to the taxpayers for the year is \$434,826. Such an increase should be retroactive to January of this year on a prorated basis. Increases after 2014 would take place every four years beginning in January 2018, for the following 12 years. All members would receive an additional \$2 per hour on each January of each four year period. An example I will give is three, January 2018, you do the 2080 hours times \$49, it would bring their salary up to \$101,920. That is an increase of \$4,160 or \$100 a year or .50 cents an hour for each year.

January 2022, would be the next increase - I won't go through all the math other than their salary would increase to \$106,080. In January 2026, their salary would increase to \$110,240. This process would bring the members hourly rate to \$53 per hour after the 12 year period. Beyond 2026, no further adjustments would be made to MLAs salaries until another compensation committee has been appointed to review.

Such a system would be truly transparent, fair, and easy to follow with regard to future costs to taxpayers. If I may just explain the transparency, fairness and the ease of it all; the current structure has been for a long time, both in the public and private sector, to give percentage increases; that seems to be the norm. I'm suggesting there reaches a point where the norm should not be normal or not take place anymore and I'll give you an example.

For someone who makes \$90,000, it's reasonable to give them a 3 per cent increase. For someone who makes \$30,000, it's reasonable to give them a 3 per cent increase and both of them could be in the same room with a crowd of people and all getting the same increase and all think it's fair. However, no one knows what that 3 per cent is calculated on. Simple math, 3 per cent of \$90,000 is \$2,700; 3 per cent of \$30,000 is \$900. All we're doing by continuing the increases once you've reached a certain salary structure is widening the gap between the haves and have-nots. That person at the bottom could never ever catch the person at the top regardless of how hard they try. At the end of the day they still both go to the same store, buy the same loaf of bread, same milk and yet one person at a percentage increase is getting \$900 and the other person is getting \$2,700. We have to start putting things into perspective in the society we live in today.

My next comment is in regard to pensions. Nova Scotians and its taxpayers can no longer afford to deal with (a) the high cost associated with making annual contributions to the MLA pensions; (b) based on what report you read, the taxpayers' contribution is between \$5 million to \$10 million annually, or \$10 to \$20 for every \$1 contribution made by an MLA. I know last year the Taxpayers Federation said it was \$20 to \$22, there was

another group said it was \$16 to \$18, the previous government even admitted that it was somewhere between \$3.5 million to a little better than \$4 million. To me, pick whatever one you want to pick when you follow my example because it really doesn't matter, other than if you pick the lowest it means it's just less, if you pick the one that's maybe the real one then it costs us more. But the whole idea is we have to try to save.

When it comes to figuring out what MLA contributions are, it's not the easiest thing for a layman to try to figure. I've been looking all over the place to see what it would be. What I did find out - and I apologize if my math is wrong - but I believe I found that our MLAs pay 9 per cent of their base salary and if you're a Cabinet Minister, or put in another position it's an additional 6 per cent. Those are the figures, and just taking the basic salary of them you're in the area of \$450,000 of contributions that our MLAs are making. If you take the taxpayers' figure of \$20 and you multiply that it's not hard to figure out it's \$8 million or \$9 million. If you take the middle approach it's not hard to figure out it is \$6 million and if you take even what the previous government said you're still into \$3.5 million to \$4 million.

What I'm suggesting is, taxpayers can no longer deal with the uncertainty and the volatility of the unfunded liability issues because at the end of the day all of that money is in some pot and if it's not out there properly invested, or investments are bad, at the end of the day taxpayers are even going to contribute more. Under the current format, in my opinion, this can no longer be sustainable.

Should we provide our politicians with some form of pension compensation for representing us? Absolutely, but it has to be in a different form than the one that is in place now. Therefore I would like to respectfully suggest the following: (a) you wind up the current plan on June 30, 2014. Actuaries would then start the process of calculating how much each current MLA is entitled to. They would then prepare a detailed document for each MLA outlining their entitlement and when they would be eligible to start collecting a pension from the windup plan; (b) beginning on July 1st of this year, we, the taxpayers, would make a \$5,000 RRSP contribution to each MLA's financial institution of their choice. Then on January 1st of each year following, we, the taxpayers, would make a \$10,000 RRSP contribution to each MLA's financial institution of their choice. The total cost annually would be \$510,000, based on 51 members. When you look at the 510 compared to whatever figure you want to take that is current, whether it is \$4 million, whether it is \$6 million, whether it is \$10 million, substantial savings to the taxpayers.

Each MLA could choose to put additional monies of their own to the maximum allowable under contribution rules each year. We need to remember that our politicians are well-educated and are more than capable of taking care of their own retirement plans.

(c) Those MLAs who are currently retired would remain in the old plan and would continue to receive their pension under the rules of that plan. I remember when the last committee prior to you was meeting, there were a lot of retired MLAs giving reports and

suggestions and stuff like that and I could well imagine how concerned they would be. What I am suggesting is those who are currently retired to stay on whatever path they are on with regards to the plan. I based it on one principle: a promise made is a promise kept. That statement was made by a unanimous decision by the Supreme Court of Canada that when people try to tamper with retirees' benefits and stuff like that, and that decision was made in the 1990s. At the end of it when you cut through it all, in layman's words, a promise made is a promise kept. There's why I have No. 3 as written.

Under the above format, the Nova Scotia taxpayers would save millions of dollars annually. When you look at the comparisons, as I said to you, it's obvious, it's simple math, easy to figure out, ordinary people can easily figure it out. The constituency and travel allowance, in my opinion the current system in place now is a fair compensation for MLAs and no changes are required.

When you look at the information I gave you, I'm trying to relay it in a manner that is from the ordinary person's perspective. I am not a lawyer, I am just an ordinary person from the street, know a little bit, have a union background, long ago retired, but at the end of the day I always like sticking my nose sometimes where I shouldn't stick it. But I do have my comments and in my opinion, I am on the outside looking in. What I see is we need to truly be transparent. We need to truly be fair to both taxpayers and our MLAs and we have to deal with a system that's reasonable and those are the reasons why I gave you my suggestions.

In closing, I realize that all the above is a major move and it will take tremendous courage to move away from something that has been traditional and enshrined in our political system, but the time has come for this committee to make changes required for the long-term benefit of all Nova Scotians for now and into the future.

I'd like to close, Mr. Chairman, by just saying, and I'm not here to offend anybody, but there are a lot of Nova Scotians who are not lawyers, who are not doctors, who are not teachers, who are more than capable of being an MLA in the House and doing a good job to represent the people of Nova Scotia. Thank you.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you, sir. Questions? Thank you very much for your presentation.

Our final presenter, I believe, is Mr. Mike Delorey. He's not here. Shall we close the meeting? We'll wait a few minutes, it's right on his start time.

With all the materials that we've received, we have a fair amount of work to do between now and March 31st, but I think we're relatively confident that we can achieve the deadline. I would say that we've been quite surprised by the submissions that we've received, of the level of misunderstanding that exists in the public of the pension plan. I just throw that out. (Interruption)

There is nobody around. We will give him another couple of minutes. We're trying to phone him. (Interruptions) Apparently Mr. Delorey is not going to be attending, he's going to send in a written submission in lieu of presenting here.

I would just like to close then by thanking you all for coming out. I would like to thank the presenters, we'll certainly take into consideration your views, your recommendations. All of this has been recorded, so we'll have a transcript of the presentations, as well as the one handed out to us. Thank you very much, and have a nice afternoon and evening.

[The panel adjourned at 2:49 p.m.]



Presentation
Nova Scotia MLA Remuneration Review
Kevin Lacey
Canadian Taxpayers Federation
February 12th, 2014

I would like to begin by thanking the committee for allowing some public consultation on the entitlements of Nova Scotia MLA's.

My organization the Canadian Taxpayers Federation has been appearing before committees much like this one for the past 20 years. We've consistently argued for greater accountability in the entitlements MLAs receive, more transparency in how MLAs spend our money and no double standards, MLAs should receive no more or no less than the working taxpayers who they work for and pay their bill.

Introduction

Since the MLA expense scandal broke our politicians to their credit made some dramatic reforms to ensure better accountability, and today Nova Scotia has one of the most accountable systems of politician expenses of anywhere in Canada.

Myths About MLA Compensation

But I want to address three myths about politician compensation.

Myth #1: that the job of a politician is a 24 hour, seven day a week job and therefore deserves special benefits and entitlements.

My reaction that that is simply...so does everyone else.

It is true that many politicians are working far and above the 40 hour work week attending events, doing their legislative duty and working to get re-elected. But so are tens of thousands of Nova Scotians along with them. And special treatment should not be afforded to politicians because of their "long hours" of work.

Also true that they have politicians have low job security, but so do the thousands of small business owners who struggle to build their businesses against all the regulations and taxes of government.

The point is not that I believe politics is easy, I know it is not, the point is in today's world many people have difficult jobs, work long hours and have low job security. Politicians don't hold a monopoly on long hours.

Myth #2: that paying a politician more means you get more qualified/better individuals offering.

There is no evidence to support this.

An MLA in Nova Scotia currently earns around little more than half of what a federal member of Parliament earns yet I don't believe anyone would say that MPs are better qualified, perform better or do their jobs better thanks to their larger pay cheque.

Taken to a more the extreme, members of US state legislatures like in the neighboring state of Maine that has part time state congressmen & women or in the New Hampshire where congressmen receive no pay at all. Yet no one would argue that our government is better just because we pay more.

The reality is salary means very little to the quality of people you have running for public office.

Myth #3: that you base entitlements on national averages/standards.

This ignores the ability the situation of taxpayers in Nova Scotia, do account the difference is number of people represented or the work load etc. of other jurisdictions. My experience is that every province politicians work differently and hence trying to treat them like they are all the same is foolhardy.

With that said there are 5 specific recommendations we would hope the committee will consider

Recommendation #1: MLA Pensions

While the pace of change has been swift to make expenses more accountable, the special entitlements like pensions, benefits etc. that go along with MLAs has largely remained untouched.

The most important of these is the MLA pension program.

Since 2010, our organization has been fighting for the reform of the best pension deal in Nova Scotia, the MLA pension program.

In our battle to attempt to bring some sanity back to these pensions, we are pleased that some movement has been made.

We saluted the previous government for sending MLA pensions to an independent review, and we are pleased the review will reduce MLA pensions by somewhere in the order of 30 per cent.

These reforms don't even begin to touch this very rich that it should be pointed out that MLAs voted to give themselves. A system that in the last legislature will pay some MLAs more in retirement than they would have earned in salary if they kept working.

This has to change.

The problem with the pension program is not simply the payouts but the very system itself. This is an issue of fairness, 77 per cent of Nova Scotians outside government have no pension at all, why should they through their taxes fund a rich system for MLAs who are supposed to be working for them.

That is why we want to see the following reforms in the pension system, many of these reforms we've been pushing since the release of our report on MLA pensions in 2010:

1. Scrap the current MLA pension system: replace with a matching RRSP program that would see the ratio of contributions to pay outs reduced from the current 22 to 1 in 2013 to 1 to 1 ratio that would be closer to what those in the private sector would receive.
2. Apply changes to made in this report, on not just current MLAs but also all previous MLAs and MLA accounts. At a minimum the 30% reduction as recommended by Justice Grouchy in his report in 2011 should be applied to all former MLAs on all pensions after 2006 when the tax free allowances were eliminated.

The reason to apply retroactively is simple, the rich MLA pensions were set up and voted by those very MLAs, it wasn't right then and its not right today.

There is precedent for applying changes retroactively; New Brunswick recently slashed pensions for MLAs by about 33% in June or 2011. Changes have been promised again in this current sitting of their legislature as all MLA pensions will put in the "shared risk" pension model which means MLAs will not longer receive guaranteed payouts each and every year.

New Brunswick has also promised in this current sitting of the legislature to introduce new legislation to put MLA pensions in what is known as the shared risk

pension model. Though the legislation has not been introduced, it will likely mean that

This is the second go around on MLA pensions in just the last two and a half years, we believe its time once and for all to do something about this system of pensions that is so rich it is far out of the reach of the taxpayers who are paying for this, who themselves can't afford to save for their own pension.

Salaries

Important to note that the while the base MLA pay is around \$90,000 a year, the average pay for a Nova Scotia politicians is actually much higher when you add it extra payments for various legislative duties including house leader, cabinet minister, opposition leader etc. Nova Scotia's 52 MLAs earn about \$105,000, well over double the provincial average income at \$799.24 a month in November 2013.

Recommendation #2: Pay for Performance

Given these big salaries its time to add some accountability that is why we propose, putting in "pay for performance".

Members of cabinet who run ministries should be accountable for the actions that happen within their departments and the government.

That is why we suggest that cabinet minister who misses the spending targets of their own departments would receive a 10% cut in salary, then they would receive another 10% if the government fails to balance the provincial budget.

Exceptions could be made in the case of extra spending for things like natural disaster relief.

Our group believes that ensuring the government only spends as much money as it takes in is a basic element of government, so why then don't we add achieving that as part of the pay packet.

Right now the only accountability mechanisms available to Nova Scotians is the ability to vote on the their local representative once every four years. We believe there should be much accountability brought into the system. And making cabinet ministers directly accountable for the performance of their departments is one way to deliver on that.

Next...

Recommendation #3: End “show up for work pay”

According to the Members Manual 2013 on page 51 it says that both outside and inside members are eligible to receive \$43 a day per diem each day the legislature sits.

This amounts to paying MLAs for simply showing up on the days that the legislature sits, something I believe most voters would say is just part of the responsibilities of an MLA and not something “extra” that they deserve compensation for.

Frankly, paying an MLA just to show up is silly.

Now I know that we are not going to balance the budget by changing this small rule.

However, it is again an issue of fairness.

How many other Nova Scotians go to work every day, do their jobs and don't receive money each time they walk through the door of their office or business.

It should also be noted that legislature rarely sits full days, Monday's for example it tends to only sit evenings and Friday's only in the mornings.

Recommendation #4: Reform Travel Allowances

Right now MLAs as you know are considered outside members if they are 40km from the legislature.

This is about a 20min commute.

And this should be changed.

But what we also hope the committee will examine the rates and we pay in apartments for outside members.

A recent report in Newfoundland concluded that it was cheaper for members to rent hotel rooms when they are required to be in the capital rather than renting apartments.

But my quick math we currently pay about \$1500 a month for apartments and allow members to charge \$153 for hotel rooms.

In the course of a year we pay approx \$18,000 for an apartment (not including expenses which taxpayers pay for), which would equal about 117 nights in a hotel. It's difficult to believe that regular government members, opposition MLAs spend that amount of time in Halifax or for that matter need to spend that amount of time in Halifax.

Recommendation #5: Citizens Committee

Lastly, we want to see future MLA entitlements set by a citizens panel.

We believe the only way to get fairness in MLA entitlements is allow real citizens to make these decisions.

This is not a novel idea, BC has had a citizens committee in the past, which eliminated many unreasonable entitlements out of MLA pay.

We believe Nova Scotia should emulate this.

And that any future committee should make recommendations before, and not after an election. And that all salaries, benefits etc. be set for a four year period, at which time they are up for review. That way MLAs know the deal they are getting before they offer for public office.

Conclusion

In conclusion let me say we have come along way with regards to expenses and entitlements of politicians in Nova Scotia. We have one of the most accountable expenses systems in all of Canada. But that doesn't mean there's not room for improvements. I hope that with these five recommendations that we can regain public trust in the system again.

BRIEF

Presented To

Mr. Roy Salmon, Chairman

Committee Members
Janet Hazelton and John Merrick

Committee Responsible for Reviewing
Members of Legislative Assembly (MLA) Compensation

Presented to Committee
February 12, 2014

I would like to thank the committee for giving the public the opportunity to express their viewpoints or comments with regards to MLA compensation.

Our MLA's deserve an increase in salary and they should get one.

However, the traditional way of giving them raises should be changed to reflect the realities of today and future generations.

Salary

The current system of giving MLA's a percentage increase should be abolished and replaced with a more transparent system that is fair to sitting members.

A process that reflects the realities of everyday life of our citizens.

A process that puts in place a Fixed Cost for years to come

Therefore, I would like to recommend our MLA's receive their compensation based on an Hourly Rate System.

Converting to an hourly rate system is a simple process.

You divide their current salary of \$89,234 by the standard hours per year worked, which is 2080 hours, (52 weeks x 40 hours).

$$\$89,234 \div 2080 = \$42.90 \text{ per hour}$$

As stated earlier, our MLA's should receive a raise. Their current rate of \$42.90 should be increased to an amount equal to \$47 per hour.

Such an increase would take their annual salary to \$97,760.

This is an increase of \$8,526 per member per year.

Such an increase should be retroactive to January of this year on a Pro rated basis.

Increases after 2014 would take place every four years beginning in January 2018 for the following **twelve years**.

All members would receive an additional \$2.00 per hour on each January of each four year period.

Example:

January 2018 2080 hours x \$49.00 = \$101,920.00

January 2022 2080 hours x \$51.00 = \$106,080.00

January 2026 2080 hours x \$53.00 = \$110,240.00

This process would bring the members hourly rate to \$53 per hour after the twelve year period.

Beyond 2026, no further adjustments would be made to MLA's salaries until another compensation committee has been appointed to review.

Such a system would be truly transparent, fair and easy to follow with regards to future cost to the taxpayers.

Pensions

Nova Scotia and its taxpayers can 'No Longer' afford to deal with:

- A) The high cost associated with making annual contributions to MLA's Pensions.

- B) Based on what report you read taxpayers contributions is between 5 and 10 million annually or 10 to 20 dollars for every one dollar contribution made by an MLA.

- C) Taxpayers can No Longer deal with the uncertainty and volatility of unfunded liability issues.

Under the current format this can no longer be sustainable.

Should we provide our politicians with some form of pension compensation for representing us?

“Absolutely”

But it has to be in a different form than the one that’s in place now.

Therefore, I would like to respectfully suggest the following:

A) Wind up the current plan on June 30, 2014.

Actuaries would then start the process of calculating how much each current MLA is entitled to.

They would then prepare a detailed document for each MLA outlining their entitlement and when they would be eligible to start collecting a pension from the wind up plan.

B) Beginning on July 1, 2014, We The Taxpayers would make a \$5,000 RRSP contribution to each MLA's financial institution of their choice.

Then on January 1st of each year, We The Taxpayers would make a \$10,000 RRSP contribution to each MLA's financial institution of their choice.

The total cost annually would be \$510,000 per year based on 51 members, and this would treat all MLA's the same.

Each MLA could choose to put additional monies of their own to the maximum allowed under the contribution rules each year.

We need to remember that our politicians are well educated and are more than capable of taking care of their own retirement plans.

C) Those MLA's who are currently retired would remain in the old plan and would continue to receive their pension under the rules of that plan.

Under the above format, Nova Scotia Taxpayers would save millions of dollars annually.

Constituency / Travel Allowance

The current system in place now is fair compensation for our MLA's and no changes are required.

In closing, I realize all the above is a major move and it will take tremendous courage to move away from something that has been traditional and enshrined in our political system.

But the time has come for this committee to make changes required for the long term benefit of all Nova Scotian's for now and into the future.

Thank you for taking the time to read my viewpoints.

APPENDIX F

ANNUAL MLA BASE INDEMNITY 2006-2013		
2006	\$	65,556.00
2007	\$	67,457.00
2008	\$	69,413.00
2009	\$	86,619.00
2010	\$	86,619.00
2011	\$	86,619.00
2012	\$	89,234.00
2013	\$	89,234.00

APPENDIX G

ANNUAL MLA ADDITIONAL INDEMNITIES						
Year	Premier	Minister	Speaker	Leader of Opposition	Deputy Speaker	Leader of Recognized Party
2006	\$ 61,324.00	\$ 43,696.00	\$ 43,696.00	\$ 43,696.00	\$ 21,848.00	\$ 21,848.00
2007	\$ 71,324.00	\$ 44,963.00	\$ 44,963.00	\$ 44,963.00	\$ 22,481.00	\$ 22,481.00
2008	\$ 73,392.00	\$ 46,267.00	\$ 46,267.00	\$ 46,267.00	\$ 23,134.00	\$ 23,134.00
2009	\$ 109,484.00	\$ 47,608.00	\$ 47,608.00	\$ 47,608.00	\$ 23,804.00	\$ 23,804.00
2010	\$ 109,484.00	\$ 47,608.00	\$ 47,608.00	\$ 47,608.00	\$ 23,804.00	\$ 23,804.00
2011	\$ 109,484.00	\$ 47,608.00	\$ 47,608.00	\$ 47,608.00	\$ 23,804.00	\$ 23,804.00
2012	\$ 112,791.00	\$ 49,046.00	\$ 49,046.00	\$ 49,046.00	\$ 24,523.00	\$ 24,523.00
2013	\$ 112,791.00	\$ 49,046.00	\$ 49,046.00	\$ 49,046.00	\$ 24,523.00	\$ 24,523.00

APPENDIX H

ADDITIONAL AMOUNTS PAID TO MLAs

Year	Government House Leader	Deputy Government House Leader	Opposition House Leader	House Leader Recognized Leader	Whips	Caucus Chair	Committee Chairs (*)	Committee Vice-Chairs
2006	\$ 10,000.00	\$ 5,000.00	\$ 10,000.00	\$ 10,000.00	\$ 5,000.00	\$ 10,000.00	IT \$3,000.00 LA \$3,000.00 OTH \$2,000.00 PA \$3,000.00	\$ 500.00
2007	\$ 10,000.00	\$ 5,000.00	\$ 10,000.00	\$ 10,000.00	\$ 5,000.00	\$ 10,000.00	IT \$3,000.00 LA \$3,000.00 OTH \$2,000.00 PA \$3,000.00	\$ 500.00
2008	\$ 10,000.00	\$ 5,000.00	\$ 10,000.00	\$ 10,000.00	\$ 5,000.00	\$ 10,000.00	IT \$3,000.00 LA \$3,000.00 OTH \$2,000.00 PA \$3,000.00	\$ 500.00
2009	\$ 10,300.00	\$ 5,150.00	\$ 10,300.00	\$ 10,300.00	\$ 5,150.00	\$ 10,300.00	IT \$3,090.00 LA \$3,090.00 OTH \$2,060.00 PA \$2,060.00	\$ 515.00
2010	\$ 10,300.00	\$ 5,150.00	\$ 10,300.00	\$ 10,300.00	\$ 5,150.00	\$ 10,300.00	IT \$3,090.00 LA \$3,090.00 OTH \$2,060.00 PA \$2,060.00	\$ 515.00
2011	\$ 10,300.00	\$ 5,150.00	\$ 10,300.00	\$ 10,300.00	\$ 5,150.00	\$ 10,300.00	LA \$3,090.00 OTH \$2,060.00 PA \$2,060.00	\$ 515.00
2012	\$ 10,506.00	\$ 5,253.00	\$ 10,506.00	\$ 10,506.00	\$ 5,253.00	\$ 10,506.00	LA \$2,101.00 OTH \$2,101.00 PA \$3,152.00 PL \$2,101.00 SP \$2,101.00	\$ 525.00
2013	\$ 10,506.00	\$ 5,253.00	\$ 10,506.00	\$ 10,506.00	\$ 5,253.00	\$ 10,506.00	LA \$2,101.00 OTH \$2,101.00 PA \$3,152.00 PL \$2,101.00 SP \$2,101.00	\$ 525.00

Committee Chairs (*)

IT Internal Economy Board Committee
LA Law Amendments Committee

OTH Other Committee
PA Public Accounts

PL Private and Local Bills Committee
SP Special or Select Committee