

of Parliament, 463 bills were introduced; three government and 43 private member bills in the Senate; 63 government and 354 private member bills in the House of Commons. So far only one Senate and 27 House of Commons government bills have received royal assent. Of the private member bills, only six have received royal assent and about a dozen have made it past first reading. Legislation chairpersons need to take this into account when putting their energies into these bills. Bill C-484 *An Act to amend the Criminal Code (injuring or causing the death of an unborn child while committing an offence)* passed second reading and has now been referred to the Standing Committee on Justice and Human Rights. Members of this committee are listed on the government website and letters may be sent to them as well as to local members of parliament.

Bill C-562 *An Act to amend the Criminal Code (right to die with dignity)* received first reading. Bill S-218 *An Act to amend the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act and to enact certain other measures, in order to provide assistance and protection to victims of human trafficking* has received second reading in the Senate and is now in committee. Bills C-25 and C-423 on the *Youth Criminal Justice Act* and Bill C-553 on warning labels are also of interest to members.

Laws lead to two other “L” words, “letter-writing” and “lobbying”. Write to government expressing concerns. Get to know local members of parliament, members of the legislative assembly and civic officials and lobby, lobby, lobby whenever possible.

“Learn” is a key word in legislation, and yes, old dogs can learn new tricks. Learn to navigate government websites and other websites of interest, for example, the Catholic Organization for Life and Family, the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops and the Canadian Catholic Organization for Development and Peace. Become familiar with the process by which a bill becomes law and how parliamentary committees work. Check out CPAC on television for hearings of government committees. It can be very informative.


One under utilized and very important word in legislation is “link”. The legislation chairperson is in a unique position to work with other standing committee chairpersons on resolutions or matters of concern. I very much appreciated the opportunity to work with National Chairperson of Christian Family Life Ann Doucet this year. The legislation chairperson can provide information on current legislation and government action. She can collaborate on generating education programs and action plans for members. Here is one case where overlap among standing committees should not be a concern; rather it is a matter of essential collaboration.

“Lead”. I challenge legislation chairpersons at all levels to take the lead in their council and do at least one presentation this year. Talk about resolutions (past and present), how government works, government bills, issues such as food labelling (good chance to cooperate with education and health), trafficking (link to community life), and if, as seems likely, an election is called, encourage members to become

informed on issues and how to question political candidates. Above all encourage members to become involved politically and to vote.

Last but not least, “love”. After all, the theme is *Love One Another*. What better way to love than to improve the well-being of fellow citizens through encouraging the passage of caring legislation. *Leading the League* states, “Legislation is social justice in action”, and what is social justice but, put simply in the words of the prophet Micah, “to love greatly, to act justly, and to walk humbly with our God”.

May you laugh, letter-write, lobby, learn, link, lead and love in this fascinating standing committee, legislation. †

LAWS




**Agnes Bedard**  
Calgary, Alberta

I am so proud of you. As I sit at the head table and listen to some of the responses, I find that members speak better than elected parliamentarians. Members don't do so because

someone told them to, they are Christian. It is extraordinary to watch.

The Archives Sub-Committee met just prior to convention. Committee members worked in national office and visited the Archives of Manitoba. Across Canada there is a problem with archives. They have been burned and get wet or lost; they aren't looked after. With new guidelines in place, let us preserve the past so it can be celebrated.

Past presidents are consulters. They live by these rules – smile, listen more, smile, speak less, smile and pray for wisdom. When these rules are followed, past presidents are successful. It is difficult to be quiet after having been noisy for so long!

The *National Manual of Policy and Procedure* and *Constitution & Bylaws* are being studied and used. Often members who know how to study and use them are asked to help prepare or update policies.

The provincial past presidents with whom I have worked are a group of extremely competent and confident women – they are focused and wise. Much is learned while in this position. We wait for your request for help and then come running out of the bushes.

Last year I had a display on the World Union of Catholic Women's Organizations at a conference and a sister came up and asked how I was. “I'm fine,” I said. And she said, “No, you are sick.” She was right. I went home and the most handsome surgeon you ever saw took out what was bad. The

cancer had not spread and I am fine now. For those of you who will receive the diagnosis this year, there is hope. I invite women in the room who are cancer survivors to stand. When you hear those words, remember this, there are people who get through it. Pray for us and for our continued health. Ask cancer survivors for their stories and they will celebrate their journey with you.

In a few hours I am going to be “past” past president. I will join the circle of friends at the honorary life members’ table. I have served with a great many of the honorary life members. I came on the national executive during Lucille Cullen’s presidency in 1991. Then came Heather Kolla, Claire Heron, Joan Chesser, Sheilah Pellerin, Vivian Bosch and Marie Cameron. Those with whom I did not serve were always there for us – Mary Matthews, Dorothy Brocklehurst, Jean Mahoney, Ardis Beaudry and Irene Lefort.

During the 35 years I have been member I have met extraordinary women. There is no way I can be sorry for this “passing”. I am going to miss all of you. I am going to miss being here every year. What a wonderful time! Thank you for being so supportive of me. I love you all and I hold you in my heart. †

## INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS



**Lorette Noble**  
Candiac, Quebec

This year the League has had the added advantage of experiencing and being part of the World Union of Catholic Women’s Organizations (WUCWO) North American Regional Conference. This was an opportunity for members to learn about WUCWO, its mission, theme and priorities, which are so closely linked with the League’s mission and theme. It also gave participants a chance to meet representatives of the other organizations in North America which belong to WUCWO. I was delighted and impressed with the large number of members who came early to attend these WUCWO days. The liturgies were beautiful and the presentations by Archbishop Richard Smith, of Edmonton, Nazanin Afshin-Jam and WUCWO President-General Karen Hurley were inspiring.

The donations this past year to the WUCWO National Voluntary Fund, from July 1, 2007, to June 30, 2008, came to \$8,328, representing an increase of \$1,249 over that of last year. The cheque has been presented to Karen Hurley.

An interesting connection worth mentioning was established at the 49<sup>th</sup> International Eucharistic Congress last June in Quebec City. I was contacted by Jacqueline Coin

from southwest France, through the Paris WUCWO office. She belongs to L’Action Catholique des Femmes and was interested in knowing what League members saw as their challenges. We met over lunch at the congress. It was quite remarkable how alike the two organizations are: a somewhat aging membership, which is sometimes daunting to younger women; attracting very busy young women who work full-time; and suggesting projects and activities likely to rouse their interest. I was able to introduce Jacqueline to Canadian WUCWO Board Member Agnes Bedard, and we exchanged ideas and promised to keep in touch.

I want to share with you the story of a letter I received from the Argentinian Embassy in Ottawa. It demonstrates the ripple effect of League action taken 25 years ago in support of the Grandmothers of the Plaza de Mayo. The letter from the counsellor at the embassy read as follows:

“It is a pleasure to send you a copy of the book entitled *Testimonies of the International Solidarity*, which was published by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, International Trade and Worship of Argentina in March 2007 as a summary of the workshop ‘A 30-year of the Coup d’État’, related to the tragic events that happened in Argentina.

“In the chapter entitled: ‘Grandmothers and the world: from north to south, an endless list’, pages 39/40, Mrs. Rosa Roisinblit thanked the cooperation of different Canadian Organizations and Institutions that worked with the ‘Grandmothers of the Plaza de Mayo’ at that time, mentioning specifically The Catholic Women’s League of Canada and its President Jean Mahoney.

“Hoping you will find this book interesting. Cordially, Luis Del Solar Dorrego, Counsellor Embassy of Argentina.”

Now, the book is in Spanish and by coincidence my husband, Christopher, has been taking university courses in Spanish for over three years, so he was able to translate the passage in the chapter by Rosa Roisinblit concerning the League, which reads as follows:

“I wish to take this opportunity to acknowledge and bear witness to the support that the Grandmothers of the Plaza de Mayo have received for a total of thirty years and in almost every country in the world.... It is no accident that Canada was the first country to support us and that by one hundred per cent. In 1979, around Holy Week, every one of the grandmothers began to receive letters of support, comprehension and requests for affiliation. I personally, and I was not alone, received over 500,000 letters, on one day alone 110....

“A short time later, we received a note from the Catholic Women’s League of Canada; its President wanted to come to Argentina to visit and share with us, and could we put her up in the Grandmothers’ house? We still had a little apartment on Montevideo Street. We dismantled the office, turned it into a bedroom with a bed, bedside table and a pretty pedestal table and lamp. And thus we received Jean Mahoney, President of The Catholic Women’s League of Canada. She stayed and