



The Catholic Women's League of Canada

MEMO

DATE: April 11, 2023
FROM: Glenda Carson, national chairperson of legislation
FOR: Parish chairpersons of legislation
THROUGH: Parish presidents and secretaries
CC: Diocesan and provincial presidents and secretaries and life members
(upon request)

“Human progress is neither automatic nor inevitable... Every step toward the goal of justice requires sacrifice, suffering, and struggle; the tireless exertions and passionate concern of dedicated individuals” (Martin Luther King Jr.).

My dear sisters in the League,

This parish council memo is the last from a national chairperson of legislation. I wish to acknowledge everyone who completed the parish council annual report surveys for 2022 and the excellent work around legislation being done by councils. However, while not new information, it is disconcerting to read that there is also no monitoring of key legislation topics in many councils and that some members are not interested in legislation and will not entertain initiatives.

Social justice, as a pillar of the League's work, is linked to social-political action. It is essential in a democracy that all citizens' voices are expressed and heard. As we know, individuals and groups across a nation hold different thoughts about what is considered just actions, who should be granted certain freedoms and how benefits should be distributed. Political parties and legislators differ in understanding the need for certain legislative acts and government policies. The loss of League voices threatens the balance of social justice interests in this democracy. It diminishes the League's effective advocacy for those most vulnerable and marginalized in society, the protection and respect for the sanctity and dignity of life, the protection of the environment, the support and protection of the church and freedom to practice our faith.

There are many reasons why a person may withdraw from engagement in the work of their government. Canadian philosopher, Charles Taylor, reflects that when a society adopts the principle, “If you don't bother me, I won't bother you,” it can lead individuals to focus more on themselves and lose interest in others—or feel their interest in others is not required or desired. Taylor warns that this apathy can result in the worth of humanity's basic needs and even human lives being evaluated against system efficiency and dollar values.

As citizens increasingly withdraw from active participation in governmental affairs, they risk becoming more focused on maintaining the comfort of their private lives and becoming more at arm's length in having a voice in vital government decision-making. While some organizations and leaders feel this is more of a path Canada may take, others, including Pope Francis and the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops, believe this nation is already experiencing these trends.

Let us all be *Catholic and Living It!* Please consider what is necessary to advocate, from a legislative perspective, for current and future needs in Canada. Please keep encouraging members to take social justice action by reading and staying informed on legislative affairs, signing petitions, writing letters and other forms of communication to legislators, considering the development of resolutions and praying for a more just society. And for those experiencing disengagement, please reflect on the forces creating the barriers to your interest in the governance of this nation and the consequences, as well as possible actions you might be able to embrace. Finally, for everyone, please continue to envision creative strategies that will contribute to the strong legacy of members as advocates for social justice through legislative engagement—"For God and Canada!"