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## Official Report of Debates (Hansard)

Wednesday 18 February 2015

## Journal des débats (Hansard)

Mercredi 18 février 2015

Select Committee  
on Sexual Violence  
and Harassment

Organization

Comité spécial de la violence  
et du harcèlement  
à caractère sexuel

Organisation

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

**SELECT COMMITTEE  
ON SEXUAL VIOLENCE  
AND HARASSMENT**

Wednesday 18 February 2015

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

**COMITÉ SPÉCIAL DE LA VIOLENCE  
ET DU HARCÈLEMENT  
À CARACTÈRE SEXUEL**

Mercredi 18 février 2015

*The committee met at 1606 in committee room 1.*

**ORGANIZATION**

**The Chair (Ms. Daiene Vernile):** Good afternoon, everyone, and welcome to the first meeting of the Select Committee on Sexual Violence and Harassment. I look around our table here and I see that we have a really interesting group, and I know that each one of you brings a diverse background. You have many skills and talents and we have some very important work that we need to tackle. As you know, the issue of sexual violence and harassment has been a front-burner issue in recent months. It's made headlines. We are all going to look at this issue and look for answers on why this is so pervasive in our society.

As we begin, I would just like to go over the mandate that was adopted on December 11, which reads:

"That a select committee be appointed to make recommendations to the Legislature with respect to prevention of sexual violence and harassment and to improving our response to Ontarians who have experienced sexual violence and harassment; and

"That the committee shall make efforts to include diverse voices, including those of young people, aboriginal people, visible minorities, LGBTQ, seniors and people with disabilities; and

"That the committee shall consider ways to shift social norms and other barriers which prevent people who have experienced sexual violence and harassment from coming forward."

Now I'd like to turn to you and to ask our members—may I begin with Laurie Scott, who is the Vice-Chair, and ask you if you have any thoughts that you'd like to share on the mandate?

**Ms. Laurie Scott:** I think that we were thinking that we'd have a general discussion. We have a broad type of mandate that's been put before us. Do you want me to get into details? Do you want me to just do a broad statement or are we going to have a discussion? Obviously, we're going to have to engage with the labour and workplace, with the policies that are in place now, and I think you have to look, of course, at the justice system also, because what we heard from both men and women is the coming forward and the comfortableness, if I can say, of bringing issues forward and then deciding whether they stay in the HR field or they call in the police—so that

type of area. And then, of course, prevention and education have to be looked at.

**The Chair (Ms. Daiene Vernile):** These are all worthwhile issues to consider.

**Ms. Laurie Scott:** I think that that's kind of the language that was used also when we were pushing for the select committee to come forward. Those were issues that we heard about the most to bring forward. Now, I'm not excluding; we can speak to who we'd like to see before committee. I don't know if we want to do this here or in a subcommittee, but those are just three broad headlines, if I can say, categories, that we should look at, and then maybe delve into other things that may occur. We might want to hear from different angles, from different issues that are maybe brought forward from either deputants that we've heard or from committee members that maybe already have some ideas of who they'd like to hear from.

**The Chair (Ms. Daiene Vernile):** Thank you. Do we have any other members who want to speak to our mandate? Yes, Mr. Hillier?

**Mr. Randy Hillier:** Thank you very much. Listen, I'm proud to be on this select committee. I think it's an important issue that needs to be examined thoughtfully and investigated thoroughly. Hopefully, we'll come up with some thoughtful solutions and recommendations to help mitigate, at the minimum, some of these problems that are so evident and that came to the fore in a very significant way in the media last year.

In addition to what my colleague Laurie has mentioned, we have done up some detailed points. Just going over the motion—and I'm glad to say that it certainly appears that the motion is sufficiently broad, and there's latitude included in the motion that doesn't constrain or restrict us too much.

But I think it might be worthwhile—I'll ask the Clerk to make some copies of some of these other detailed considerations that we'd like to have the committee just have awareness of some of the other details, and maybe, if it's in agreement with the committee, that that be appended to or included in Hansard as to some of the subjects that we would like to—

**The Chair (Ms. Daiene Vernile):** Mr. Hillier, if you would like to hand in those comments to our Clerk's office, we could make copies for everyone and we could share that.

**Mr. Randy Hillier:** Yes.

**The Chair (Ms. Daiene Vernile):** Do we have any comments from anyone else who would like to talk about our mandate—if you would like to see it expanded? Yes, Mrs. McGarry?

**Mrs. Kathryn McGarry:** Thank you, Chair. I think I would agree, actually, with Mr. Hillier that the mandate is fairly broad in its scope, because there are certainly other committees and other areas of work going on in our Legislature right now that are looking at it. I'm thinking about some of the reports that are coming forward shortly in March, particularly on some of these issues.

I think as we move forward and we hear from committee members and look at our mandate and see the work of what other committees are doing and what their goals are, it will help us to really define where we need to be moving in a general direction in this particular committee. I really see this work going on concurrently with a lot of the other committees that are here. But I think that it is good to start with something that's broad-based so that we can narrow down our work as we move along and see what direction we need to go in.

**The Chair (Ms. Daiene Vernile):** One comment that I have had regarding the groups that we'll be asking questions of is that perhaps, along with diverse voices, young people, aboriginals, visible minorities, LGBTQ, seniors and people with disabilities, we ought to be adding sex trade workers to the list. Is there anyone who would like to speak about that?

**Ms. Laurie Scott:** I think it's a pertinent issue. We have been discussing that possibility also, so we're very happy that you've brought that up to look at, especially in the recent light of press on human trafficking—that we should look at that.

**The Chair (Ms. Daiene Vernile):** Because they do experience violence.

**Ms. Laurie Scott:** Absolutely. It's a huge issue.

**The Chair (Ms. Daiene Vernile):** Okay. We are going to be passing a motion now for our subcommittee. Ms. McGarry is going to pass that.

**Mrs. Kathryn McGarry:** Thank you. I have a motion here regarding the appointment of the subcommittee on committee business.

I move that a subcommittee on committee business be appointed to meet from time to time at the call of the Chair, or at the request of any member thereof, to consider and report to the committee on the business of the committee; and

That the presence of all members of the subcommittee is necessary to constitute a meeting; and

That the subcommittee be composed of the following members: the Chair as Chair, Ms. Eleanor McMahon, Ms. Laurie Scott and Ms. Peggy Sattler; and

That substitution be permitted on the subcommittee.

**The Chair (Ms. Daiene Vernile):** Is there any discussion? Shall the motion carry? Carried.

Mr. Dong, I noticed you had your hand up earlier.

**Mr. Han Dong:** I have one more comment with regard to the mandate. I noticed the wording here, "visible minority." Is there a substitution for that? Are we speaking to the ethnic communities? Is that what we're

speaking to? I'm just thinking—for the consideration of the committee.

**The Chair (Ms. Daiene Vernile):** I'm going to ask our Clerk to speak to that.

**The Clerk of the Committee (Mr. Trevor Day):** The mandate, as written, was given by the House. Although the wording of the mandate cannot be changed except by the House, the interpretation of what you see before you is up to the committee. I'll make sure that you don't stray outside of it, but I don't see that as an issue right now. The mandate is given by the House, but the way you interpret what's here is totally up to the committee, barring going too far outside of it.

**Mr. Han Dong:** Okay.

**The Chair (Ms. Daiene Vernile):** One thing I would like to add is that we may have witnesses who come before us who are dealing with issues of sensitivity. We of course want to be sensitive to them, so I think that we need to have a common foundation of understanding on how we treat the folks who may come before us. I'm going to recommend that one of the first experts that we have speak to us be a person who will give us some understanding of proper language when we are dealing with people who may have sensitivity issues. Are we in agreement with that? Agreement? Okay.

We are now going to be deciding on issues of our budget. My question to you is: Do we do it with our full group here, or shall we meet as a subcommittee? Let me ask you: Shall we move forward in a subcommittee to talk about budget issues?

**Ms. Laurie Scott:** I think that's just a little easier, if a member from each party and the Chair in a subcommittee with the Clerk in the office meet to discuss budget and travel etc.

**The Chair (Ms. Daiene Vernile):** Ms. Scott, that recommendation will come out of your subcommittee and of course will be put to the full committee.

**Ms. Laurie Scott:** Yes, of course.

**The Chair (Ms. Daiene Vernile):** If there is no further business, we can adjourn. Any more questions?

**Mr. Randy Hillier:** Are we going to have that initial paperwork, then? Are you going to have that copied and distributed to the committee as well?

*Interjection.*

**Mr. Randy Hillier:** It's on its way. All right.

**The Chair (Ms. Daiene Vernile):** All right. Folks, thank you very much. I look forward to working with all of you. We have important work to do.

**Ms. Peggy Sattler:** Just in terms of the logistics, when does the subcommittee meet? Does it always meet in advance of this committee?

**The Clerk of the Committee (Mr. Trevor Day):** The subcommittee will meet at a time that's mutually agreeable to all three members. My office will schedule with the three subcommittee members to find a time that works for them. Once they've met, the committee will then receive the report at the next full meeting.

**The Chair (Ms. Daiene Vernile):** All right. Thank you, folks. We're adjourned until our next meeting.

*The committee adjourned at 1618.*







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#### **Vice-Chair / Vice-Présidente**

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Mr. Han Dong (Trinity–Spadina L)

Mr. Randy Hillier (Lanark–Frontenac–Lennox and Addington PC)

Mrs. Marie-France Lalonde (Ottawa–Orléans L)

Ms. Harinder Malhi (Brampton–Springdale L)

Mrs. Kathryn McGarry (Cambridge L)

Ms. Eleanor McMahon (Burlington L)

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Mr. Trevor Day

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