

Motions

MOTION 13-18(2): NORTHWEST TERRITORIES DISABILITY ACTION PLAN, CARRIED

MS. GREEN: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, WHEREAS disability is defined by the World Health Organization is any restriction or inability resulting from impairment to perform a daily activity in the manner within the range considered normal for a human being;

AND WHEREAS, persons of all ages living with disability have the right to live in fully inclusive and participatory society where they have choice, are valued and respected is equal and contributing members of the community;

AND WHEREAS, at least 15 per cent of the population of the Northwest Territories lives with a disability with challenges in every community;

AND WHEREAS, an additional one in nine people in the Northwest Territories are impacted by a disability as family members and caregivers;

AND WHEREAS, there continue to be considerable and long-standing barriers to full participation and citizenship in society for people of all ages with disabilities;

AND WHEREAS, these barriers and gaps in service are not well documented or understood;

AND WHEREAS, the mandate for the 18th Assembly says government will ensure effective supports and programs are in place for persons with disabilities by preparing an accessible inventory of GNWT supports that already exist and responding to previous evaluations of government supports;

NOW THEREFORE I MOVE, seconded by the honourable Member for Deh Cho, that the Government of the Northwest Territories work with the NWT's Disabilities Council and other allies in the disability community to develop a five-year action plan that addresses the needs of the disability community including measurable outcomes and ongoing evaluation;

AND FURTHER, that the government respond to this motion by the end of June 2016 with a proposed timeline for the development of the described action plan.

Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Mahsi. Motion is on the floor. Motion is in order. To the motion. Member for Yellowknife Centre.

MS. GREEN: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. It's my honour today to bring this motion forward on behalf of the many people who live with disabilities in the Northwest Territories. The Government of the Northwest Territories through the NGO Stabilization Plan funded a study that was completed by NWT's Disabilities Council of the status of disabled people in the Northwest Territories, and the results were somewhat discouraging.

First and foremost, the number of people with disabilities has grown and so has unequal access to the different supports that they need to live whole and fulfilling lives. Underemployment is common. Barriers to access in many different dimensions are also common. Poverty is widespread.

MR. SPEAKER: Member Yellowknife Centre, would you please rise to make your remarks.

MS. GREEN: Oh, we're not in Committee of the Whole. I beg your pardon, Mr. Speaker. So what the Disabilities Council is requesting is that there be work done that starts from today that looks at the five pillars of the disability life, which includes education, employment, income, disability supports, and housing, and that together this group, along with the territorial government, come up with an action plan which will produce measurable outcomes and an evaluation plan that will show progress on meeting the needs of people with disabilities. I'm not sure previous Assemblies have so badly failed people with disabilities, but I think that we have a chance now to make a difference to them by providing them with an action plan and the increase support they need to live whole and fulfilling lives. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Mahsi. To the motion. I'll allow a seconder to make comment on the motion.

MR. NADLI: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I, too, rise in support of this motion because in my constituency of Deh Cho, there are disabled persons who are affected by autism, spina bifida, brain injuries. It's rather unfortunate that the citizens sometimes are ostracised and pushed to the outer periphery of society. But here in the NWT we pride ourselves on having a good healthcare system. In Canada, we have almost a universal healthcare system that guarantees that each of us will be cared for in a very dignified manner by health professionals when we need help. Unfortunately, the reality is that here in the NWT, because we are separated from Southern Canada, we don't have the facilities that we should have, facilities that could bring about proper care for people who do need specialized care, and especially, treatment with dignity. People who should be treated with dignity and cared for in a loving way, involving their families as well. I stand in support of ensuring that there is needs assessment done at the same time as evaluation and an action plan developed by this government, and we would go forward in ensuring that we meet the needs of disabled persons in the NWT. Mahsi.

MR. SPEAKER: Mahsi. To the motion. Member for Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh.

MR. BEAULIEU: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I also rise in support of the motion put up by Ms. Green and Mr. Nadli. In my riding, we do have persons with physical disabilities. We have persons with, also, invisible disabilities in the community. People with physical disabilities are often housebound all winter because, in the small communities, we don't have the proper accessible vehicles to move people around. We don't have the proper infrastructure on the roads and so on for easy mobility for people, like wheelchairs as an example. For sure, if this is supporting addressing many of those issues that we are facing in the small communities with our persons with disabilities, I definitely support the motion.

MR. SPEAKER: Mahsi. To the motion. Member for Nahendeh.

MR. THOMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I also rise to speak to this motion. I would like to thank Ms. Green and Mr. Nadli for bringing this motion forward. I live with a non-visible disability in my own family, and as I have spoken in the House here previously about the education system and the challenges that they have had there, I really think we as the government need to come up with a process. After I spoke about it, I had a number of constituents ask about this as well, and I explained that Ms. Green was bringing this motion forward that would ask the Government to address this and come up with a plan so that we could actually make all residents equal on this. I thank Ms. Green and I will be supporting this motion. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Mahsi. To the motion. Honourable Member for Great Slave.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, in my capacity as the Minister responsible for Persons with Disabilities, I am pleased to support this motion today. The Government of the Northwest Territories remains committed to improving services for persons

with disabilities and to do so we need to take a government-wide view of what needs to be done and how to accomplish it. We need to also rely on the expertise, the knowledge, and dedication of non-government organisations and volunteers in our communities, who work every day to improve access and services for persons with disabilities. The 2008 action plan helped to focus priorities and resulted in some concrete improvements, but it's time for a fresh start. I have asked the departments to collaborate on preparing an updated inventory of GNWT resources, programs, and services that are available today to support persons with disabilities. This work, which is almost complete, will set the stage for us to move forward with the development of an action plan by identifying gaps and opportunities for improvement. I have also met with the NWT Disabilities Council and asked them to partner in this work. As this motion is consistent with the Mandate that was tabled recently, Cabinet will be supporting this motion.

MR. SPEAKER: Mahsi. To the motion. I will allow the mover to make the closing remarks on the motion.

MS. GREEN: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. I would very much like to thank the Minister responsible for Persons with Disabilities for his promise of a fresh start, and thank him for his offer to collaborate. I am looking forward to taking part in that myself and to furthering the quality of life for people who have disabilities. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Mahsi. Member for Yellowknife Centre.

MS. GREEN: A recorded vote please, Mr. Speaker.

RECORDED VOTE

MR. SPEAKER: Mahsi. You almost missed that one there.

---Laughter

The Member has asked for a recorded vote. To the motion. All those in favour, please stand.

CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Mercer): Ms. Green, Mr. Nadli, Mr. Vanthuyne, Ms. Cochrane, Mr. Abernethy, Mr. McLeod - Inuvik Twin Lakes, Mr. Schumann, Mr. Sebert, Mr. Simpson, Mr. Blake, Mr. McNeely, Mr. Nakimayak, Mr. Beaulieu, Mr. Thompson.

MR. SPEAKER: All those opposed, please stand. All those abstaining, please stand. All those in favour, 14; opposed, zero; abstentions, zero. The motion is carried

---Carried