

MEMBER STATEMENT—JULIE GREEN, MLA YELLOWKNIFE CENTRE
EXTERNAL REVIEW OF AURORA COLLEGE SOCIAL WORK PROGRAM
October 15, 2018

MS. GREEN: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to talk about the external review of the Aurora College Social Work Diploma program. I obtained the review last month, not through the Minister but through an access to information request. I believe that one of the reasons this review has not been made public is because it contradicts the government's line. The review shows the program is worthwhile. It should never have been cut. Instead, it must be redeveloped to improve student success.

Mr. Speaker, the decision to end the social work program came in response to the government's decision to cut spending in all departments, including Aurora College. After the uproar over ending the program, the Minister of the day reinstated it, but then put the enrolment on hold. Only after all of that happened did the college contract a review of the social work program.

Mr. Speaker, after a second year without enrolment, the program is dying a slow death, and the decision to let it die is fundamentally wrong. The program has many strengths, including meeting the requirements for licensed social workers, its excellent instructors, its students who are from the population they will be working with as social workers. What would make it a better program, as the review recommends, is redeveloping it as a Bachelor of Social Work degree. Degrees are now the norm for social workers. A degree program would address the problem of students having to take third- and fourth-year courses in their first year because university-level elective courses aren't available in Yellowknife.

Mr. Speaker, the review makes some other important recommendations. First, to gather program partners together to create an advisory committee that will assist with development of the program and future evaluation. Second, improve program reporting so that both the college and the program itself are using the same measurements. Third, screen students more rigorously to ensure they can meet the challenges of the program and provide them with more support to graduate on time.

Mr. Speaker, the Aurora College Foundational Review recommends the college become a degree-granting institution. Let's start with the social work program. The government must immediately work with the college to implement the report recommendations before the last staff and students leave and there's nothing left to work with. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.