



**ASSESSING GENDER AND DIVERSITY
SENSITIVITY AT THE LEGISLATIVE
ASSEMBLY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA**

PREPARED FOR THE COMMONWEALTH WOMEN
PARLIAMENTARIANS – CANADIAN REGION

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Executive Summary

Canada is celebrated as one of the most diverse countries in the world, with a rich array of gender and intersectional diversity seen across Indigenous and settler populations. This diversity, however, is not reflected in Canada's national and provincial legislatures. Although women were first elected to Canada's national and provincial legislatures approximately 100 years ago, it took until the 1980s for women's representation to hit double digits.¹ The first Indigenous woman elected to Canada's national parliament was just over 30 years ago, around the same time as the first Black woman and the first open lesbian woman secured seats.² Successive elections have recently reached historic highs, returning the most intersectionally diverse members to Canada's national, provincial, and territorial legislatures, although these bodies still do not closely mirror Canada's demographic profile.

A closer look at the well-worn statistics reveals Canada's parliaments are not yet gender and diversity sensitive institutions where equality is promoted and achieved across all "bodies and internal structures".³ As is the case with other parliaments, Canada's legislatures are overwhelming comprised of "white male elites" and their "working practices continue to reflect the traditions and preferences of members who have historically populated it".⁴ With women comprising 29 percent of Members of Parliament, Canada ranks 53rd of 193 countries, placing it well below other established democracies including some Commonwealth parliaments such as New Zealand (48 percent, 5th place) and the UK (44 percent, 39th place), and far below Rwanda (61 percent, 1st place).⁵ The proportion of women holding seats in provincial and territorial legislatures in Canada varies from a high of 48 percent (Northwest Territories) to a low of 22 percent (Prince Edward Island). When taken as a whole, women hold 34 percent of all provincial and territorial legislative seats.⁶

Counting matters: diversity data are needed to track changes in who is and who is not present, with a recent Commonwealth Women Parliamentarians' survey revealing there is room for improvement for more diversity data collection.⁷ While most Commonwealth Parliamentary Association executive committees collect data on parliamentarians' gender, age, and profession,

few collect these data for candidates and few collect diversity data for either parliamentarians or candidates on a wider range of identities, including education, disability, parenthood, sexuality, and ethnicity.⁸ Collecting and counting data alone do not reveal which women are successful and which are not, thus, an intersectional approach is needed to reveal women's, including transgender women's and non-binary peoples', different political experiences to ensure that the pattern of white professional male dominance is not replicated by white majority women.⁹ Important too is considering women's substantive representation, for example, what happens to women once elected and whether women and men have similar rates of promotion and levels of responsibility.¹⁰

It is also critical to view legislatures as places of work not only for elected members but for an array of behind-the-scenes personnel such as administrative staff and other non-partisan and partisan staff, and if parliaments respond to the needs of all these groups, including staff and visitors. Knowledge on the different working conditions for women and men in legislatures is limited but parliamentary institutions are understood to be unique workplaces with their own rules, structures, and outputs – all rife with “organised masculinism”, making them comparatively unwelcoming and non-inclusive spaces.¹¹ Mona Lena Krook finds violence against women in politics is experienced in a range of established democracies, including Canada's, and negatively affects women's equal right to fully and safely participate in their work.¹² A Commonwealth Women Parliamentarians' study reveals violence against women in politics takes several forms, from micro aggression to bullying, and includes sexual harassment, sexual violence, rape, and murder.¹³

Gender and diversity assessments are important for understanding the conditions under which both members and staff carry out their parliamentary duties and can change how we understand institutional design as well as legislative behaviour.¹⁴ Such assessments draw attention to a democracy's internal ‘health’ when women members and staff face obstacles at work and raise concerns about gender mainstreaming when it is not a guiding principle across all parliamentary processes.¹⁵ Undertaking a gender and diversity audit not only reveals the inner workings of

parliamentary institutions and the outcome of representative processes but the strategies to enhance equality in legislative workplaces.¹⁶ Underpinning a gender and diversity assessment is “institutional leadership” where the focus is on fixing institutions rather than on fixing women or members with other identities.¹⁷

This report sets the stage for conducting gender and diversity sensitive audits of Canada’s parliamentary institutions and provides a blueprint toward making federal, provincial, and territorial legislative assemblies more representative and inclusive. To date, no fulsome internal or external gender and diversity sensitive assessments have been undertaken in Canada. Those conducted in other Commonwealth parliaments are instructive – including in the United Kingdom where a gender sensitive assessment led to a series of transformative recommendations designed to improve the effectiveness and legitimacy of its national parliament.¹⁸

This report uses evidence from the Legislative Assembly of British Columbia (BC) to bring this work to Canada. By way of background, on October 24th, 2020, British Columbians elected a record number of women to their Legislature during the 42nd General Election, with women holding 37 of 87 (43%) seats in the House and Premier John Horgan appointing BC’s second sex-balanced cabinet. Despite these positive results, the BC Legislature appears to have much work to do before it is fully gender and diversity sensitive, although the extent to which inequality and insensitivity exists has not been fully assessed. A *gender and diversity sensitivity audit* is a good first step to identify where the BC Legislature might be falling short. Such audits typically assess the extent to which formal and informal structures, culture, practices, and norms are gender and diversity sensitive using a multi-phased approach. Access to this information usually requires support and permission from relevant officials, with an expected data collection, analysis, assessment, and recommendations taking approximately eight to twelve months.

This report details how a full gender and diversity sensitivity audit of the BC Legislature would assess the experience of all who regularly interact in this environment including MLAs, legislative officers, staff, interns, and statutory officers, using a four-phase approach: (1) Diagnosis; (2) Assessment; (3) Recommendations; and (4) Monitoring. During Phase 1

Diagnosis, auditors explore what data are available and what needs to be generated. Phase 2 employs surveys, focus groups, interviews, and workplace observations – including House proceedings, committee work, and use of facility space – then statistical, comparative, and longitudinal analysis as well as a red-amber-green light (RAG) rating system to evaluate these data. Reform options are generated, presented to stakeholders for comment, and finalised in Phase 3 Recommendations. Phase 4 puts in place tools for collecting and reviewing information on a longitudinal basis to track progress over time.¹⁹ The report concludes with a preliminary ‘snapshot’ by which to assess the BC Legislature’s readiness for a full audit. The snapshot reveals the BC Legislature would benefit from a gender and diversity sensitive audit, but such an undertaking would involve considerable data collection and analysis, and a collective institutional willingness to embed the principles of a gender and diversity sensitive parliament into its structures, operations, methods, and work.

Background

In fall, 2020, the Commonwealth Women Parliamentarians (CWP) Canadian Region proposed utilising CWP Strengthening Funds to explore undertaking a gender sensitivity audit of the BC Legislative Assembly. The goal of the audit is to assess the current level of gender and diversity sensitivity found within the formal and informal structures, culture, practices, and norms of the BC Legislature, including the impact of gender and intersectionality, leading to recommendations for more inclusive and representative political spaces. In addition to benefitting BC, it was thought a gender and diversity sensitivity audit could be useful for those seeking to conduct audits in other Canadian parliaments.

Discussions for undertaking a gender audit have been taking place for some time in BC. For example, in December 2017, the Honourable Darryl Plecas, Speaker of the Legislative Assembly of BC, established the “Speaker’s Forum on the Role of Members”. The vision of the multi-year forum was to engage citizens through a series of roundtables to identify challenges in the Legislature’s processes and structures. Roundtables of political scientists, media, youth, educators, Indigenous Peoples, Legislative Assembly interns, and former members of the Legislative Assembly (MLAs) discussed barriers facing Members, interest groups, and the public.²⁰ These discussions revealed many instances of gender and diversity insensitivities within a gendered workplace, a general lack of diversity, and a discouraging lack of decorum.²¹ The reports suggest conducting “...a gender-based analysis, or gender audit, of the operations of the Legislative Assembly.”²²

Parliaments across the Commonwealth, including Canada’s, face several challenges to their democracies including representativeness, inclusion, and public engagement.²³ A recent Samara survey reveals most people living in Canada feel it is important to live in a democracy but nearly half are concerned that democracy is getting weaker with many feeling that the country’s parliamentary institutions are not keeping up with the changing population.²⁴ In responding to these concerns Canada’s parliaments can look to the Inter-parliamentary Union’s (IPU) international standard of parliamentary “good practice” where a parliament should aim to be

“truly representative, transparent, accessible, accountable, and effective in its functions”.²⁵

Toward this goal, a gender and diversity parliament is inclusive and has several pillars, including: (1) greater diversity amongst its members not only in terms of gender but in terms of identities such as Indigeneity, ethnicity, disability, sexual orientation, and gender expression and identity; (2) “equal and effective participation”; and, (3) institutional responsibility to address gender and diversity deficits.²⁶

More diverse and inclusive parliaments have the potential to become more effective and legitimate institutions. Decisions reflect a more expansive set of interests, concerns, and issues and a wider range of skills, experiences, and perspectives.²⁷ The public are more likely to view parliamentarians as more representative of their interests and parliaments as more responsive to their concerns.²⁸ From the IPU, initial questions to consider toward a parliamentary sensitivity assessment focus on: (1) the number of women and women with intersecting identities in parliament and the positions they hold; (2) the laws in place to support equality; (3) the extent to which the culture is sexist and racist; (4) the facilities in place to support the work of all women and men; (5) the extent to which all members are shouldering their gender and diversity equality responsibilities; and, (6) the gender and diversity sensitivity of parties.²⁹

A key focus of gender and diversity sensitivity reform concerns descriptive representation, defined as legislatures proportionately reflecting the populations they represent in terms of sex, gender, gender expression and identity, sexual orientation, Indigeneity, race, ethnicity, and other social characteristics and shared experiences.³⁰ From a normative perspective, Anne Phillips famously argues: “There is no argument from justice that can defend the current state of affairs: and in this more negative defence there is an argument from justice for parity”.³¹ The “politics of presence” matters not only for reasons of justice but, as noted, for matters of legitimacy and policy, with descriptive representation strongly linked to substantive representation.³² For example, Manon Tremblay shows that women legislators in Canada tend to advance and support legislation for women to a greater degree than men.³³ This trend is seen in other countries, including Sweden, where Lena Wängnerud finds more gender sensitive legislation passes when

more women legislators are present. Some, however, suggest the descriptive/substantive relationship is complex, as there are no guarantees, for example, that women always act for women.³⁴ While a clear causal relationship between descriptive representation and substantive representation has been somewhat difficult to empirically establish, it is now widely accepted that the two are closely related.³⁵ For example, legislative sex parity is often seen as the overall goal as the presence of women legislators has at least the potential to transform an otherwise masculine institution into a more gender sensitive institution.³⁶

Phillips encourages exploring systemic descriptive underrepresentation through empirical assessments of parliaments on grounds that “if there were no obstacles operating to keep certain people out of political life, then we would expect positions of political influence to be randomly distributed between both sexes and across all ethnic groups”.³⁷ Women’s and other groups’ disproportional underrepresentation in legislatures presents an irrefutable case for policy action.³⁸ Today there are few who do not concern themselves with the descriptive representation of women and, increasingly, with other underrepresented groups such as Indigenous People, Black People, and People of Colour (IBPOC) and Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Transsexual, Queer and Questioning Two-Spirit, Intersex, Asexual, and Plus people (LGBTQ2SIA+).³⁹

Concern about gender and diversity sensitivity in political institutions is widespread and longstanding, and as parliaments become more diverse, they face increasing pressure to also become more inclusive.⁴⁰ Relatively newer is the “ideal and practice” of gender sensitising parliaments with the first publication on the topic surfacing twenty years ago in the form of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association’s (CPA) publication *Gender Sensitising Commonwealth Parliaments*.⁴¹ The CPA’s report flagged levels of women’s political underrepresentation as unacceptable and proposed women’s political participation must include both formal *and* substantive representation, where women legislators exercise real political power.⁴² Such ‘power sharing’ would benefit Commonwealth countries and the people living in them.⁴³ Since then, the CPA has been “working with and through” the CWP toward increasing women’s political representation.⁴⁴ This is seen in the CPA’s 2020 report *Gender Sensitising*

Parliamentary Guidelines, which draws on a survey completed by 21 CPA Parliaments.⁴⁵ The report emphasises the value of Commonwealth Parliaments in undertaking gender sensitivity audits and includes gender sensitivity guidelines and a checklist.⁴⁶ The CPA and CWP are not alone in this endeavour – they are part of an international effort toward political equality between women and men – a key principle of organisations such as the United Nations and of international treaties.⁴⁷

Gender sensitising parliaments is highlighted in the work undertaken by the IPU, which in 2011, published *Gender Sensitive Parliaments: A Global Review of Good Practice*, in 2012, a *Plan of Action for Gender Sensitive Parliaments*, and in 2016, *Evaluating the Gender Sensitivity of Parliaments: A Self-assessment*.⁴⁸ The IPU reports provide examples of gender sensitive parliaments in practice, identify seven ‘key action areas’ (composition and leadership, policy framework, mainstreaming, culture, male champions, political parties, and parliamentary staff), and a self-assessment methodology. The IPU’s ‘self-assessment toolkit’ has been used by several parliaments, including, in 2018, the UK’s Parliament which resulted in the *UK Gender Sensitive Parliament Audit 2018*.⁴⁹

The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development’s (OECD) *Toolkit for Mainstreaming and Implementing Gender Equality: Implementing the 2015 OECD Recommendations on Gender Equality in Public Life’s* chapter *Gender-sensitive Practices in Parliaments* provides self-assessment questions across three main areas (oversight and accountability, mainstreaming, and balanced representation), with each area outlining examples of ‘good practice’ and ‘key actions to consider’.⁵⁰ Sarah Childs’ *The Good Parliament* (2016) represents the “first published report of a parliamentary diversity sensitive parliament” and includes 43 recommendations directed at 9 institutional actors of which 18 have been “actioned”.⁵¹ A key feature of the report is its emphasis on moving away from individual sensitivity champions and toward “institutionalising diversity sensitive parliamentary processes”.⁵²

In 2018 and 2019, the European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE) published two reports, the first, *Gender Sensitive Parliaments Toolkit*, provides an online quantitative self-assessment tool across five areas (access, influence, spaces, legislation, and symbolic functions). The second, *Gender Equality in National Parliaments across the EU and the European Parliament*, offers the 2019 results of European parliaments' self-reporting exercises.⁵³ In 2020, the IPU published *Gender and COVID-19: A Guidance Note for Parliaments*, where a gender sensitive parliament research agenda is outlined.⁵⁴

For the most part, publications use variations of the IPU's definition, with 2020 gender sensitive parliamentary publications including parliaments' responsibility to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic with gender sensitivity.⁵⁵ Organisations adopting versions of the IPU's definition include the OECD and the EIGE.⁵⁶ Widely cited, the IPU fully defines a gender sensitive parliament as one that “promotes and achieves equality in numbers of women and men across all of its bodies and internal structures” and “mainstreams gender equality throughout all of its work”. A gender sensitive parliament “fosters an internal culture that respects women's rights, promotes gender equality, and respects the needs and realities of MPs – men and women – to balance work and family responsibilities”. As well, it “encourages political parties to take a proactive role in the promotion and achievement of gender equality”. Lastly, a gender sensitive parliament extends beyond elected members and “equips parliamentary staff with the capacity and resources to promote gender equality, actively encourages the recruitment and retention of women to senior positions” and “ensures that gender equality is mainstreamed throughout the work of the parliamentary administration”.⁵⁷

The ideal of gender sensitive parliaments is ‘becoming the norm’, however, no parliament has fully achieved gender and diversity sensitivity with most lacking in women's descriptive, substantive, and symbolic representation. As workplaces, most legislative bodies continue to be “modelled on the habits and preferences” of men legislators and “...clerks and officials who built, maintain, and continue to over-populate them”.⁵⁸ The drive toward gender sensitive parliaments has led to transnational cooperation with “lessons” learned in one country “taken

abroad” and “shared via international non-governmental organisations, parliamentary organisations, and individual and organised groups of elected Members and officials and Clerks”.⁵⁹ An example includes British MP Harriet Harman who recently shared “her experience introducing proxy voting for MPs on ‘baby leave’ with the Canadian Parliament”.⁶⁰ There is also inter-parliamentary competition, with some working within legislatures “vying to be the most inclusive organisation” with the most women and members of the LGBTQ2SIA+ community.⁶¹

The Canadian and BC Context

Canada's Parliament and provincial legislatures are not traditionally viewed as particularly gender and diversity sensitive. Elected bodies still predominantly reflect the work and interests of white, straight, professional, non-disabled men.⁶² This point is illustrated in Joan Grace's portrayal of Canada's Parliament as an "inequality regime" in which male privilege runs through its values, policies, and practices".⁶³

Canada's 43rd Parliament is often praised for its diversity, with a record number of members of Parliament (MPs) who are women and/or who identify as IBPOC elected in the 2019 General Election.⁶⁴ Indeed, Prime Minister Justin Trudeau became an international sensation by appointing Canada's first federal sex-balanced cabinet, inspiring the viral "becauseits2015" Twitter hashtag.⁶⁵ Yet Canada still lags far behind many other established democracies, with its position dropped by a whopping 22 spots between 2011 and 2020, from 30 to 61 according to the IPU's ranking of women in national parliaments.⁶⁶

British Columbia's 42nd Parliament boasts a record 37 out of a possible 87 women members (43 percent), well ahead of its national counterpart and most provinces, and behind only the Northwest Territories (48 percent) and Quebec (44 percent).⁶⁷ Much of BC's success in terms of representation rests on a party quota – in the form of an equity mandate – to secure women and diverse candidacies in winnable seats. To date, only the BCNDP uses such an equity measure, and as research reveals, legislative diversity in other countries, for example the UK, usually rests upon the electoral fortunes of parties using equally strong or even stronger equity measures.⁶⁸ In October 2020, the BCNDP elected 29 women, comprising an historic 51 percent of BCNDP Members elected – including a record number of IBPOC women. However, there are no other quotas currently in place – such as legislative quotas – to ensure women's and other groups' sustained representation.⁶⁹ Still there is much to laud in BC, including the first South Asian speaker and first woman clerk, and a second sex-balanced cabinet.⁷⁰ But as noted, descriptive representation is only one of many requirements of a fully gender and diversity sensitive parliament. A legislature cannot be truly gender and diversity sensitive if balanced representation

is not accompanied with equity across all its bodies and structures and throughout all its work, culture, and administration.⁷¹

No in-depth systematic internal or external gender and diversity sensitivity assessment of Canada's Parliament or provincial and territorial legislatures have been published. In 2012 and 2013, Canada's Library of Parliament did produce two gender sensitivity reports using the IPU's toolkit – these provide insightful descriptive details, for example, on the number of on-site child-care spaces and women's washrooms, and the number of women MPs and committee chairs, but they do not offer recommendations.⁷² In 2019, Canada's Standing Committee on the Status of Women (FEWO) produced a study entitled *Barriers Facing Women in Politics*.

Recommendations include strengthening the application of “gender-based analysis plus” across all federal departments, agencies' programs, initiatives, and strategies, with several of the recommendations directed at improving the collection of fulsome gender and intersectional data on women's participation in politics, and a recommendation for the Government of Canada to “create a financial incentive” for parties to nominate more women candidates.⁷³

A 2020 study by Jeanette Ashe, *Gender Sensitivity Under Trudeau: Facebook Feminism or Real Change?* uses an evaluative methodology based on 32 gender sensitive indicators to explore gender sensitivities longitudinally and comparatively in legislatures, finding gender sensitivity across two of Canada's Parliaments (41st and 42nd) improved across 12 of 32 gender sensitive indicators. The study's findings reveal that eight of the improvements are in the ‘representation’ category (i.e., the number of women MPs, cabinet ministers, and senators), one is in the ‘infrastructure’ category (parental leave), and three are in the ‘policies and legislation’ category (i.e., more committees using Gender Based Analysis Plus evaluations). Results indicate changes have led to Canada's Parliament becoming more gender sensitive, but not to the extent expected, underscoring the point that feminist rhetoric and symbolism do not necessarily lead to substantive change.⁷⁴

In 2020, Canada's Equal Voice published its *Gender-Sensitive Legislatures Report* which draws upon interviews and surveys to identify obstacles women face in electoral politics, including, for

example, harassment, sexism, gender stereotypes, legislative decorum (gender-based heckling), parliamentary calendar, and sitting hours – as well as recommended solutions. Equal Voice's recommendations fall under three pillars: (1) providing a safe and respectful workplace, (2) implementing family friendly measures, and (3) modernising. Several other academic studies on women's and other group's political underrepresentation in Canada all suggest the country's legislative bodies are far from gender sensitive places.⁷⁵

Canada's parliamentary institutions are imbued with hierarchical power dynamics amongst and between elected members and public servants who work in different ways to serve the constituents to whom they are accountable. The wide array of people working in legislative assemblies include elected members, appointed officials, impartial staff, and party staff. Elected assemblies consist of members, some of whom also serve as cabinet ministers and sit on cabinet committees or serve as parliamentary secretaries. As well, employees of legislative assemblies provide professional and non-partisan services to support parliamentary work, with assembly administrations including several departments such as the office of the speaker, office of the clerk, Hansard services, and legislative libraries. Further, there are parliamentary pages and interns as well as partisan staff hired to assist their caucus and members' work.

Some consider parliamentary institutions to be unregulated workplaces where many labour laws do not apply because of parliamentary privilege and where some employees are protected by collective agreements while others are not.⁷⁶ Many sign nondisclosure agreements which discourage or in some cases prevent employees from publicly pursuing instances of workplace bullying and harassment.⁷⁷ Bullying is commonplace and even encouraged and violence against women in politics, including gender-based harassment and physical and sexual assault, is not unheard of.⁷⁸ Where they exist, codes of conduct and harassment policies between members and members, members and staff, and staff and staff are outdated with few including anything on gender equality and violence against women in politics.⁷⁹

The IPU notes that harassment policies should be an integral part of a parliament's equity strategy and praises Canada's Parliament on this front. Unlike some other parliaments, Canada's

has sexual harassment policies, with many provincial legislatures introducing these and/or strengthening them. Under PM Stephen Harper, the MP-to-MP code was added to the appendix of the Standing Orders as a response to the November 2014 suspension of two Liberal MPs, Massimo Pacetti and Scott Andrews, following complaints by two women NDP MPs that Pacetti sexually assaulted one of them and Andrews sexually harassed the other.⁸⁰ Although PM Justin Trudeau removed both MPs from the Liberal caucus the incidents revealed that Canada's Parliament had no mechanisms or policies in place to deal with sexual harassment between MPs.⁸¹

Modernised codes of conduct are positive developments, but they do not always address the underlying culture that allows sexual and gender-based harassment to occur in the first place. For example, Canada's new MP-to-MP code of conduct is not without problems. A recent study reveals how the code is a "new institutional rule 'nested' inside old intransigent institutions" and thus it "not only fails to challenge existing patriarchal norms, but also reinforces and permits them under the guise of change".⁸² The new code narrowly defines harassment, pushes the "myth of false reporting," and leads to "victim blaming".⁸³ The code, for example, includes incidents of sexual harassment, defined as "unwanted conduct of a sexual nature that detrimentally affects the work environment," but excludes a wider range of gender-based harassment.⁸⁴ Gender-based harassment is not explicitly sexual and includes unwanted comments and heckling – a practice where legislators "taunt, ridicule, and demean (mostly female) parliamentarians".⁸⁵ Further, the code does not recognise the impact intersecting identities such as Indigeneity, race, and sexual orientation, expression, and identity have upon experiences of harassment.⁸⁶

Canada's Procedures and House Affairs Standing Committee's (PROC) *Interim Report on Moving Towards a Modern, Efficient, Inclusive and Family Friendly Parliament* flags heckling as an ongoing problem and a practice that is not conducive to a respectful workplace.⁸⁷ At the same time, by portraying such behaviour as another part of lively debate, the traditional and masculine culture of Parliament is left largely unchallenged in the report: "the Committee has attempted to strike an appropriate balance between moving forward as a modern workplace"

while “ensuring the longstanding conventions and cultures, which are the foundation of a legislature, are not unduly disturbed.”⁸⁸

So deeply engrained is heckling that in 2018 federal Green Party leader and MP Elizabeth May stated “this is the only workplace in Canada where abuse is routine. It’s perfectly acceptable to have people yelling at you, making nasty comments to you, while you’re on the floor of the House of Commons doing your work”.⁸⁹ In line with this, Samara Canada’s report “Cheering or Jeering” finds 69 per cent of MPs feel heckling is a problem and women MPs frequently report hearing heckles directed at their gender and appearance; most of the 20 per cent of MPs who feel heckling affects their ability to do their job are women.⁹⁰ PROC’s report does not make any recommendations regarding such “decorum in the House,” and this, along with the speakers’ inconsistency in calling it out reinforces the idea that such behaviour is “not unparliamentary”.⁹¹

#MeToo’s very public arrival on Parliament Hill and in other jurisdictions across Canada further highlights the importance of codes of conduct in addressing gender-based harassment.⁹²

Incidents of misconduct since Canada’s new code’s implementation in 2018 are too numerous to cite but some media spotlights include MP Christine Moore accusing MP Erin Weir of inappropriate behaviour and MP Gerry Ritz calling Minister Catherine McKenna “Climate Barbie”.⁹³ The extent of unparliamentary gender and diversity insensitive behaviour is further captured in a 2018 survey where close to 58 per cent of women MPs who responded indicated they experienced sexual misconduct while in office by way of unwanted remarks, gestures, and texts, with three MPs reporting sexual assault and four reporting sexual harassment.⁹⁴ This behavior also affects women staff and interns, for example, women made up 9 of 10 complainants to the Office of the Chief Human Resources Officer as reported in the Annual Report on the *House of Commons Policy on Preventing and Addressing Harassment 2015-2016*.⁹⁵

Like other jurisdictions across Canada, BC needs a gender and diversity sensitivity audit for many reasons. Women’s representation in BC politics has increased, but progress has been slow. Over the last three elections there has been only a six-percentage point increase in women

members (37 percent in 2013, 38 percent in 2017, and 43 percent in 2020), and, falling behind the Northwest Territories and Quebec, BC is no longer leading the way in women's political representation. Women face demand-side obstacles at the party level with men aspirant candidates five times more likely to get selected by party members than women in open and winnable seats.⁹⁶ Unlike men, women are much less likely to 'self select' into politics and tend to come forward only after many requests by party leaders. To date, while one BC party uses a party equity policy reserving candidacies for women and other equity seeking groups, only New Brunswick's Legislature has adopted legislation that incentivises parties to select more women candidates.⁹⁷ For many, politics is seen as a 'survival of the fittest' with the tone and culture of the legislature sending an important message about who belongs there and who can serve the public.⁹⁸ Unfortunately, little is known about the intersectional impact of these factors.⁹⁹

Women are even less likely to self-select when they have children, and when they are elected, they have lower rates of retention.¹⁰⁰ Since 2001, BC's MLAs are no longer deducted pay for missing work after giving birth but, like most other jurisdictions except for Canada's Parliament and Newfoundland and Labrador's House of Assembly, they still must receive the Speaker's approval for absences due to sickness or for another reason. Thus, parental leave has not yet been made explicit or formalised.¹⁰¹ As with most other jurisdictions, again with the exception of Canada's House of Commons and Newfoundland and Labrador's House of Assembly, BC has no childcare or family room. At the same time, since 2018, changes to the Standing Orders allow the presence of children (newborns and young infants) in the House, but this amendment does not explicitly address nursing.

As noted, evidence shows women are more likely to limit their participation once elected in response to a negative political culture, including heckling.¹⁰² And while a gender and diversity review of BC's legislature has not yet been undertaken, in 2019 the Legislative Assembly Management Committee approved in principle the Assembly's first comprehensive *Respectful Workplace Policy* which "affirms a respectful workplace environment free from bullying [and] harassment," including sexual harassment, and "discrimination and violence" and "applies to all

participants of the Legislative Assembly including Members, ministerial staff, caucus staff, and Legislative Assembly employees” as well as “interactions with external parties such as visitors, Legislative Assembly contractors, and member of the Legislative Assembly Press Gallery”.¹⁰³ Further, a 2019 incident where a woman employee was asked by the Sergeant at Arms to leave the Speaker’s corridor because she was wearing a sleeveless shirt ignited a public ‘right to bare arms’ campaign and led to the replacement of the Legislature’s outdated dress code with a modernised dress code allowing women to wear sleeveless attire.¹⁰⁴

Negative media stories on such issues potentially undermine public confidence in BC’s democratic institutions especially among underrepresented groups. A recent poll reveals most BC residents would like to see an improvement in the decorum of the House including banning heckling and desk banging.¹⁰⁵ Whether concerning unparliamentary behavior or gendered dress codes in the BC Legislature, instances and allegations of sexual harassment and violence in the House of Commons and other provincial legislative assemblies, or negative depictions of women and other equity-seeking groups in positions of power, these issues have received increased public attention since the onset of the MeToo, Black Lives Matter, and Idle No More movements, and will continue to receive attention until they are fully addressed.¹⁰⁶

Gender and Diversity Sensitivity Audit Methodology

A gender and diversity sensitivity audit of the BC Legislative Assembly should apply to the entire institution as well as to a broad scope of actors. It requires completing four phases: (1) diagnostics; (2) assessment; (3) recommendations; and (4) monitoring. Each phase employs different data and methods across four dimensions including: (1) participation; (2) infrastructure; (3) culture; and, (4) equality/substantive representation.¹⁰⁷ The following sections explain the audit scope, dimensions, phases, and other factors in more detail.

Audit Scope

Returning to the IPU's definition, a gender and diversity sensitive parliament is a place that responds to the "needs and interests" of people in its "structures, operations, methods, and work" and removes barriers to full participation.¹⁰⁸ As such, the *scope* of the audit must include the broadest array of participants. When considered as a holistic workplace, as noted, legislatures include more than elected members, but also officials, staff, and anyone involved in the day-to-day workings of the Assembly to include the assembly administration, non-partisan staff, ministers, parties, and caucuses. The BC Legislature sits on the traditional territory of Lək'wəḡən People, today known as the Esquimalt and Songhees Nations, and within a province in which close to 200 First Nations are located. BC is also home to 4.5 million residents with ancestries from around the globe. Thus, an inclusive BC Legislature, and any audit, should respond to the needs of all underrepresented groups, especially those with intersecting identities including gender, Indigeneity, ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender expression and identity, and physical ability.

Research shows people identifying as women and as IBPOC and/or as LGBTQ2SIA+ are disproportionately underrepresented in politics, not only in elected posts, but also in appointed and hired positions.¹⁰⁹ Their underrepresentation is unjust and reflects institutional features creating barriers to politically marginalised groups. As noted, there is a link between descriptive and substantive representation – between who people are and what is done, and this connection strengthens the case for an inclusive parliament on grounds it improves policies and legitimacy

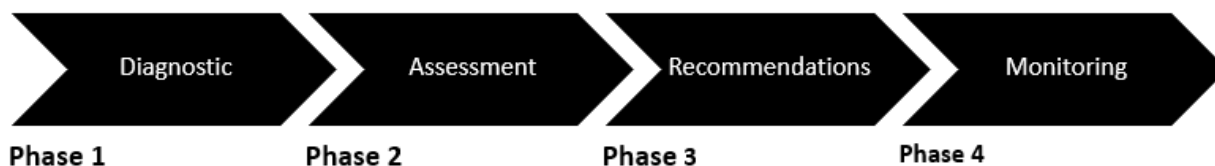
of our democratic processes.¹¹⁰ This is not to say that only women can represent women or Indigenous People can represent Indigenous People, but rather it is about the relationship between the Legislative Assembly of BC and the people it represents – descriptively, substantively, and symbolically.¹¹¹

A gender and diversity sensitivity audit requires a multimethod approach with which to collect and analyse a range of qualitative and quantitative data and identify and assess the gender and diversity sensitivity of the legislature at various points in time, as well as to compare BC's legislature with other legislatures. The research design and methods with which to conduct a gender and diversity sensitivity audit must move beyond mere documentation and consider how to institutionalise sensitivity. In other words, audit methods should lead to instigating, entrenching, and expanding institutional change, requiring committing to undertaking a gender and diversity sensitive audit every three to five years and focusing on the dynamics of such change.¹¹²

Audit Phases

Gender and diversity sensitivity audits require examining four dimensions across the four audit phases. Dimension 1, “participation”, includes assessing the extent to which a diverse group of parliamentarians is selected for, and elected to, parliament and how, once present, they are enabled to become effective participants across parliament's core activities. Dimension 2, “parliamentary infrastructure” examines how the legislature facilitates the work of all those within the organisation, covering everything from building layouts and furniture to the official rules and working practices underpinning legislative work. Dimension 3 “parliamentary culture” assesses the unwritten practices within the legislature. Dimension 4 “equality policy and substantive representation” includes reviewing legislation, policy, scrutiny, and interest representation and asking whether parliament acknowledge the perspectives and address the needs and interests of women and equity seeking groups.¹¹³ The four phases are explained below in more detail.

Figure 1: Gender and Diversity Sensitivity Audit Phases



Phase 1: Diagnostics

The audit diagnostic consists of a checklist used to create a snapshot of what is known and unknown about the data, structures, processes, and actors. Phase 1 diagnostics do not evaluate findings in terms of whether the legislature meets gender and diversity sensitivity thresholds and targets, but rather the extent to which sufficient information exists to enable auditing. Diagnostic questions include those such as “what diversity data are already collected and useful for audit purposes?” and “what relevant institutional processes are in place?” A gender and diversity sensitivity checklist maps information gaps while increasing the auditors’ institutional knowledge. Checklist completion requires interviewing members, staff, and experts.

The gender and diversity sensitivity checklist enables auditors to “identify how able they are to initiate and secure gender sensitive parliamentary reform” and pinpoint “who has the authority, powers, and resources to lead on a gender [and diversity] sensitive parliament”.¹¹⁴ It also further demonstrates “what new roles and processes need to be established” to facilitate reform and ensure sensitivity becomes a permanent governance feature.¹¹⁵ The checklist is not an audit, but rather works in conjunction with a formal gender and diversity sensitive auditing process.¹¹⁶ The preliminary ‘snapshot’ for the BC Legislature included at the end of this report provides an example of how a checklist uncovers what key information is available and unavailable.

Phase 2: Assessment

In terms of assessing the gender and diversity sensitivity of BC’s Legislature, the IPU’s widely cited *Gender-Sensitive Parliaments: A Global Review of Good Practices* and *Evaluating the Gender Sensitivity of Parliaments: A Self-Assessment Toolkit* and the CWP’s *Gender Sensitising Parliament Checklist* provide good starting points. These documents offer definitions,

assessment advice, and potential questions, but little in the way of detailed methodology and are not intended to facilitate ranking or comparison. In *The Good Parliament*, Sarah Childs uses the IPU's framework to develop a detailed methodological approach to assess the diversity sensitivity of the UK's Parliament during PM David Cameron's Conservative government. Childs uses a RAG technique: red-amber-green (poor-improved-good) analysis, based on traffic light colours, to document insensitivities and signal if the Parliament is doing badly, well, or if it has "shown some improvement but ... considerably more needs to be done".¹¹⁷ Childs' assessment indicates the institution fails to meet the majority of the IPU's gender-sensitive standards and provides a path towards this, with several of the 43 recommendations since filled, such as proxy voting.¹¹⁸

Building on the IPU and CPA's frameworks and Childs' *The Good Parliament* emerges another methodology used by Jeanette Ashe to longitudinally compare gender-sensitive progress across Canada's 42nd and 43rd Parliaments (2011-2015 and 2015-2019) and is proposed for a gender and diversity sensitive audit of BC's Legislature. It uses a range of indicators classified into several categories, for example, (1) *representation*, contains measures such as the number of women MPs and committee chairs; (2) *infrastructure*, includes measures such as parental leave and night sittings; and (3) *policies and legislation*, consist of measures such as sexual harassment and gender-based analysis plus (GBA+). When used for longitudinal comparison, each indicator is simply scored as "1" when conditions have substantially improved, "-1" when conditions have substantially declined, and "0" for no change.¹¹⁹ This method allows for a comparison from one year to the next and between different governments as well as other jurisdictions to measure progress or decline and identify which gender and diversity sensitive indicators need attention.

Assessment involves reviewing relevant literature, gathering data from various sources, including election returns, Standing Orders, motions, bills, and codes of conduct. The auditors also need access to the everyday comings and goings in most areas of the Legislature to gauge workplace activities, interview MLAs, meet with groups of MLAs, speak with individual and

groups of clerks and officials, observe House activities and interactions in the Legislature's social spaces, and subject a range of legislative publications to a gendered/diversity reading.

These data fill out the phases and dimensions identified through the Phase 1 diagnostic checklist but move beyond these questions to undertake a (1) RAG snapshot analysis of the Legislature as well as (2) a multiyear comparative analysis to facilitate future monitoring.

The RAG analysis of BC's Legislative Assembly involves counting the diversity of MLAs elected to the Legislature; assessing MLAs' participation in committees and in leadership positions; documenting equality and diversity provisions in the Standing Orders; evaluating gender and diversity bills and legislation; and noting explicit institutional commitments to diversity and inclusion; as well as examining how the Legislature 'feels' for Members from different backgrounds. The multiyear analysis highlights gender and diversity progress and decline. Activities during this phase include:

- Developing an advisory group of MLAs and officials
- Creating an online survey for past and present MLAs/staff
- Identifying MLAs and staff to interview and survey regarding their work experiences
- Interviewing/surveying past and current MLAs and staff, including those with dependents
- Observing/interviewing/surveying women's, IBPOC, and LGBTQ2SIA+ caucuses
- Gathering and analysing descriptive diversity data
- Identifying and scheduling which House proceedings and committees to observe
- Observing Question Period, committees, and other House proceedings
- Gender and diversity analyses of the Standing Orders, bills, and legislation
- Observing the space
- Reviewing websites and virtual tours to assess gender and diversity history inclusion
- Observing the art
- Surveying school groups who visit the Legislature, and reviewing visitor feedback
- Analysing data and writing up the results

Phase 3: Recommendations

Auditors share assessment findings with experts, staff, and Members to generate and finalise recommendation options in Phase 3 with an aim to entrench gender and diversity sensitivity, as these qualities are the responsibility of the institution. Drawing on Childs' *The Good Parliament*, the Legislature's "...gender insensitivities should not be thought of as the responsibility of those individuals negatively affected by them" ... or of those MLAs "prepared to expend personal and political capital on them", nor can the responsibility be "handed over solely to political parties" as their interests "might conflict with the House as an institution".¹²⁰ Instead, the Legislature must think of itself as an institution responsible for gender and diversity sensitivity and appropriately respond to any identified insensitivities.¹²¹

Audit recommendations not only provide solutions to address the gender and diversity insensitivities. They should also assign responsibility for implementing necessary changes. For example, for each of Childs' 43 recommendations in *The Good Parliament*, an individual, such as the Speaker, or a body, such as the Procedures Committee, are tasked with their implementation.

Recommendations draw on the results from the RAG, multiyear, and comparative analyses. This involves consultations with individuals such as the Clerk, ministers, MLAs, the Parliamentary Secretary for Gender Equity, as well as with working groups of staff and MLAs. The consultations include interviews and surveys. From these consultations, interviews, and surveys come information needed to direct specific individuals or groups to take the lead in implementing the audit's recommendations.

Phase 4: Monitoring

Monitoring is essential to ensure ongoing implementation of gender and diversity sensitivity measures. One possible approach would be to create a small reference group modelled on the UK's Commons Reference Group on Representation and Inclusion to "deliver significant symbolic and substantive improvements" within the Legislature.¹²² Such a small, representative, and cross-party group could take the "...lead in ensuring that individual actors" and the

Legislature “collectively fulfill their roles in implementing necessary reforms”.¹²³ The reference group is responsible for drawing “up a programme of action for each Parliament” and for reporting “back to the Speaker on an annual basis”.¹²⁴

Workplan and Other Considerations

A full gender and diversity sensitivity audit of a single legislative body takes approximately eight to twelve months depending on access and support. The timeframe is built around a ‘snapshot’ based on a 68-question gender and diversity sensitivity checklist adapted from the CWP’s *Gender Sensitising Parliaments Guidelines: Standards and a Checklist for Parliamentary Change* to specifically fit the BC context (see Appendix A). Results of a first pass through data from the BC Legislature are summarised below, with customisations developed by consulting academics, experts who have conducted similar audits in other jurisdictions, BC MLAs, and BC legislative staff. It is important to note, this summary does not reflect the work of a full audit, but rather a sample of areas to be covered by a complete assessment.

This checklist maps the BC Legislature’s readiness for a gender and diversity audit across several dimensions, including equality of participation, parliamentary infrastructure, parliamentary culture, equality policy, and substantive representation.¹²⁵ The checklist examines the extent to which the BC Legislature incorporates and utilises a set of five institutions, data, and positions as they apply to gender and diversity:

- (1) *Formal rules and processes* (i.e., the existence of legislative bodies responsible for equality);
- (2) *Official data* (i.e., the extent to which information is kept of candidate or MLA diversity);
- (3) *Sanctioned reviews* (i.e., committee reviews of how Standing Orders impact diverse MLAs);
- (4) *Expert advisors* (i.e., gender and diversity educational teams); and,
- (5) *Oversight bodies* (i.e., equality committees).

All but 11 of the 68 questions in the completed preliminary review of the checklist indicate a considerable absence of gender and diversity institutions, data, and positions, suggesting considerable work needs to be undertaken before a full four-phase audit could be completed. This result should not be viewed pessimistically as the checklist simply recognises what has not yet been identified, not that it does not exist or could not be initiated. In addition, the snapshot demonstrates the BC Legislature has already shown some progress, for example, through a 2019 code of conduct review which led to a new *Respectful Workplace Policy* to address sexist

language and behaviour, sexual harassment, gendered bullying, and violence against women in politics which applies to relations between MLAs, MLAs and their staff, and MLAs and legislative staff, and through a 2019 updated dress code for BC's Parliament Buildings to include sleeveless wear as acceptable professional attire.¹²⁶

Turning to component parts, in terms of (1) *Formal rules and processes*, the checklist review indicates the BC Legislature has no specific bodies responsible for gender and diversity nor do the *provincial Constitution Act* and *Human Rights Code* specifically refer to gender and diversity in political representation, and the Legislature does not have formal requirements to debate underrepresentation in plenary debates. Further, there are no formal rules requiring equality or a minimum number of committee chairs, committee members, and other parliamentary leadership positions for different social groups.

Concerning (2) *Official data*, the BC Legislature does not collect disaggregated data on candidate and MLA diversity, nor does it collect and publish data on MLA participation in plenary debates, formal question period, committee proceedings, delegation travel, leadership positions, and equality training. Disaggregated diversity data are not collected for legislative staff participation in delegation travel, witnesses before committee, pay, or characteristics of media personnel given privileged access to the Press Gallery.

Moving to (3) *Sanctioned reviews*, the Legislature has not undertaken recent assessments (in the last three years) of equality or sensitivity. Nor has it comprehensively reviewed electoral laws, Standing Orders, the legislative calendar, sitting hours, or existing equality legislation.¹²⁷ Further to this, no recent reviews have been conducted concerning the characteristics of committee witnesses, informal norms and conventions, facilities, or mentoring programmes.¹²⁸ Nor have there been recent reviews of parental leave, caring leave, childcare, office allocation, or pay gaps.¹²⁹

In terms of (4) *Expert advisors*, no equity experts or policies are in place in the Office of the Clerk Department, education teams, digital services, security teams, or human resource's teams.

Gender mainstreaming and gender budgeting training for MLAs, MLA staff, or legislative staff is not compulsory but sexual harassment and bullying training is provided and mandatory for staff.

Finally, looking at (5) *Oversight bodies*, BC does not have an all-party women's caucus, a women's committee, an equalities committee, or a women's network organisation. Nor does it have a formal women's committee to scrutinise the work of the Legislature and monitor the Legislature as a gender and diversity sensitive institution. Where there are no laws requiring government policy and legislation to be reviewed with regard to gender or diversity impacts, on the positive side, the Parliamentary Secretary for Gender Equity's mandate is to ensure gender equity is "reflected in our budgets, policies and programs" and to "act as the government's liaison with feminist and women's organisations" as well as work to "address the gender pay gap and systemic discrimination in the workplace" and "develop a plan to end gender-based violence".¹³⁰

Lastly to consider, in 2020, UN Women published its *Primer for Parliamentary Action: Gender-sensitive Responses to COVID-19*, which highlights the ways parliaments can ensure their COVID-19 responses address women's needs and the importance of institutionalising gender sensitive assessments, and it provides a checklist.¹³¹ The gendered effects of the COVID-19 pandemic have prompted international organisations to underscore the importance of gender sensitive assessments and urge parliaments to adopt supplementary reforms and initiatives to enable gender intersectionally sensitive responses.¹³² The CWP's recent report notes, "the full effects of the global crisis are not known" and "without attention to its gendered economic, social, cultural, and health effects, there are considerable risks that women's needs and interests will be unmet" thus "leaving women significantly disadvantaged".¹³³ The CWP has developed a toolkit for parliaments to demonstrate how they can "remain operational" and uphold "democratic rights and responsibilities".¹³⁴ To this end, the CWP's *Gender Sensitising Parliament Guidelines: Standards and a Checklist for Parliamentary Change* reflects the

ongoing contributions of the CWP toward current discussions of gender sensitive parliaments beyond COVID-19.¹³⁵

At this point we do not know for how long the COVID-19 disruptions will last; however, most parts of a gender and diversity sensitive audit of the BC Legislature will be largely unaffected and possible to evaluate. Despite the negative impacts of COVID-19, the pandemic policy responses have led to innovations in parliamentary procedures and operations that are worth examining. These responses include how remote voting and virtual meetings have impacted participation in parliamentary work, decorum, and other behaviours.

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Appendix A – Sample Gender and Diversity Sensitivity Audit Checklist¹³⁶

Formal Rules & Processes
Are any bodies responsible for gender equality within the BC Legislature?
Does the BC Legislature have a gender equality plan in place?
If the BC Legislature has a gender equality plan, what does it cover?
If the BC Legislature has a gender equality plan, who has overall responsibility for its delivery and monitoring?
Does BC's constitution or other legal framework directly refer to gender equality?
Does the Legislature have formal requirements to debate the under-representation of women in plenary debates?
Does the Legislature have any formal rules requiring a minimum number of women's participation as committee chairs & committee members, & other parliamentary leadership positions?

Official Data
Does BC's Legislature collect & make publicly available diversity disaggregated data relating to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Candidate diversity • MLA diversity • MLA participation in plenary debates • MLA participation in question period • MLA participation in committee proceedings • MLA participation in delegation travel • MLAs in leadership positions • MLAs & legislative staff taking gender and equality training
Does BC's Legislature collect & make publicly available diversity disaggregated data relating to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Legislative staff participation in delegation travel • Witnesses coming before committees • Gender pay gaps (MLAs/staff) • Journalists in the press gallery

Sanctioned Reviews
Has the BC Legislature undertaken an assessment of gender equality in the last three years?
If so, has it undertaken an assessment with MLAs, MLA staff, or parliamentary staff?
Has the BC Legislature undertaken a gender and diversity sensitive review of any of the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Electoral law • Standing Orders • Codes of conduct • Legislative calendar and sitting hours
Has the BC Legislature undertaken a gender sensitive review of any of the following in the last three years? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sex breakdown of committee witnesses & external committee reports • Informal norms and conventions • The dress code • Mentoring programs for MLAs and staff • Job shares for MLAs • Parental leave & caring leave • Proxy voting, surrogate MLAs, or other provision to cover MLAs' work in the legislature & constituency • Full time childcare facilities providing permanent care (e.g., nursery) • Ad hoc childcare facilities providing temporary care • Office allocation

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The right to have infants on the floor (formal rule) • The right to breastfeed/infant feed on the floor (formal rule) • The provision of breastfeeding rooms • The gender pay gap for MLAs/MLA staff
Does the Legislature's code of conduct address sexist language & behaviour, sexual harassment & gendered bullying, or violence against women?
Does the Legislature's code of conduct govern relations between MLAs, MLAs & their staff, & between staff?
Is there an independent grievance plan for those experiencing gendered inappropriate behaviour?

Expert Advisors
Are data disaggregated by sex and data relating to policy available within BC's Legislature?
Are gender experts present & gender equality policies in place in the: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Clerk's department (e.g., the administrative department supporting committees) • Outreach teams • Education teams • Digital services • Media teams • Security teams • Human resources team
Does the Legislature provide training in the following areas, and is it compulsory? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gender mainstreaming • Gender budgeting • Sexual harassment & bullying • Leadership
Is there a law requiring government policy & legislation are reviewed with regard to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gender equality impacts • Gender budgeting
Are there formal links with the following? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gender experts • Women's movement representatives • Women's representatives from the media

Oversight Bodies
Does the Legislature have: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A woman's caucus (all party & party) • A woman's committee • An equalities committee • Women's networks/ organisations
Which, if any, of the above 'gendered parliamentary bodies' have a formal or an informal role in the legislature's efforts to 'gender sensitise' the institution?
If the legislature has a formal women's committee, does it: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scrutinise the work (outputs) of the legislature (e.g., laws, scrutiny, representation) • Monitor & judge the legislature as a gender sensitive institution • Hold to account the responsible government (Minister/Department) dealing with women's issues
Does the Legislature provide funds to support women MLAs' visits to other parliaments to share international gender 'best practices', including via the CWP?

Endnotes

- ¹ Agnes Macphail, elected in 1921, is Canada's first woman MP and Louise McKinney and Roberta MacAdams, elected in the 1917 Alberta general election, are the first women elected to a provincial legislature; see Arscott and Trimble 1997.
- ² In 1988 Ethel Blondin-Andrew became the first First Nations woman MP and in 1993 Jean Augustine became the first Black woman MP. In 1997, Libby Davies became the first open lesbian MP. In 2004, Ruby Dhalla, Nina Grewal, and Yasmin Ratansi became the first South Asian women MPs; personal correspondence with Grace Lore, April 2019.
- ³ Inter-parliamentary Union 2011, 6; See Childs 2016, 7.
- ⁴ Childs 2016, 1.
- ⁵ Inter-parliamentary Union. 2021. *Monthly Ranking of Women in National Parliaments*. <https://data.ipu.org/women-ranking?month=1&year=2021>
- ⁶ Statistics from CWP-Canadian Region:
http://www.cpahq.org/cpahq/Main/Women_MPs/Regions/Canada/Main/Women_MPs/Regions/CWP_Canada_Regi on.aspx?hkey=ef96c7d0-ef50-406d-ac82-0e717529f333
- ⁷ CWP 2020.
- ⁸ CWP 2020, 5.
- ⁹ CWP 2020, 6.
- ¹⁰ Erikson and Verge 2020, 1.
- ¹¹ Erikson and Verge 2020, 3; <https://www.kantar.com/north-america/company-news/inclusionindex>.
- ¹² CWP 2020, 7; Krook 2020.
- ¹³ CWP 2020, 7.
- ¹⁴ Erikson and Verge 2020, 2.
- ¹⁵ Erikson and Verge 2020, 2.
- ¹⁶ Erikson and Verge 2020, 2.
- ¹⁷ Childs 2016, 1; CWP 2020, 6-7.
- ¹⁸ Childs 2016.
- ¹⁹ Childs 2016; Ashe 2020(b).
- ²⁰ <https://www.leg.bc.ca/Documents/Speakers-Forum-Year-Three-Report.pdf>
- ²¹ <https://www.leg.bc.ca/Documents/Speakers-Forum-Year-One-Report.pdf>
- ²² <https://www.leg.bc.ca/Documents/Speakers-Forum-Year-Two-Report.pdf>
- ²³ <https://www.samaracanada.com/research/2019-democracy-360>
- ²⁴ <https://www.samaracanada.com/research/2019-democracy-360>
- ²⁵ <https://www.ipu.org/our-impact/gender-equality/gender-sensitive-parliaments>; Childs 2016, 6.
- ²⁶ Childs 2016, 6.
- ²⁷ Childs 2016, 6.
- ²⁸ Childs 2016, 6-7.
- ²⁹ IPU 2011, 117-130; Childs 2016, 7.
- ³⁰ Mansbridge 1999; this discussion is drawn from Ashe 2020(a)(b).
- ³¹ Phillips 1998, 232.
- ³² Mansbridge 1999; Phillips 1998.
- ³³ Arscott and Trimble 2013.
- ³⁴ Pitkin 1967.
- ³⁵ Lovenduski 2005; see Ashe 2017; Ashe 2020(a)(b).
- ³⁶ As cited in Ashe 2020(b), 70.
- ³⁷ Phillips 1998, 229.
- ³⁸ Ashe 2020(a)(b).
- ³⁹ See Ashe 2020(b)(c); Bird 2016; Tolley 2016; Tremblay 2019.
- ⁴⁰ Ashe(a)(b)(c); Childs 2016; IPU 2012, 2016.

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- ⁴¹ Personal correspondence with Sarah Childs, December 2020.
- ⁴² CWP 2020, 2.
- ⁴³ CWP 2020, 2.
- ⁴⁴ CWP 2020.
- ⁴⁵ Author Sarah Childs.
- ⁴⁶ The literature review is informed by personal correspondence with Sarah Childs, December 2020.
- ⁴⁷ CWP 2020, 2.
- ⁴⁸ Authored by Sonia Palmieri.
- ⁴⁹ <https://www.ipu.org/our-impact/strong-parliaments/setting-standards/self-assessment-tools>.
- ⁵⁰ <https://www.oecd.org/gov/toolkit-for-mainstreaming-and-implementing-gender-equality.pdf>
- ⁵¹ Personal correspondence with Sarah Childs December 2020.
- ⁵² Personal correspondence with Sarah Childs, December 2020. See also, Sarah Childs, 2016. ‘The Good Parliament’ <https://www.bristol.ac.uk/media-library/sites/news/2016/july/20%20Jul%20Prof%20Sarah%20Childs%20The%20Good%20Parliament%20report.pdf>
- ⁵³ Authors Tania Verge, Nazia Chowdhury, and Irina Ulcica.
- ⁵⁴ Author Zenia Hilal.
- ⁵⁵ CWP 2020.
- ⁵⁶ The OECD defines GSP as one that responds: “... to the needs and interests of both women and men in their structures, operations, methods and work, and remove barriers to women fulfilling their potential” in OECD: *Toolkit for Mainstreaming and Implementing Gender Equality* (2020) <https://www.oecd.org/gov/toolkit-for-mainstreaming-and-implementing-gender-equality.pdf>. The EIGE’s self-assessment encourages countries to “Measure how well your parliamentary institution integrates gender equality and is responding to the different needs of women and men”. See EIGE. 2020. ‘Gender-sensitive Parliaments’ <https://eige.europa.eu/gender-mainstreaming/toolkits/gender-sensitive-parliaments>
- ⁵⁷ IPU 2017, 7.
- ⁵⁸ Personal correspondence with Sarah Childs, December 2020.
- ⁵⁹ Personal correspondence with Sarah Childs, December 2020.
- ⁶⁰ Personal correspondence with Sarah Childs, December 2020.
- ⁶¹ Personal correspondence with Sarah Childs, December 2020.
- ⁶² Lovenduski 2005; 2017; Raney 2020.
- ⁶³ Grace, 2016, 841; As cited in Ashe(b) 2020, 69.
- ⁶⁴ Discussion is drawn from Ashe 2020(b).
- ⁶⁵ Ashe 2020(b).
- ⁶⁶ IPU 2020; Ashe 2020(b).
- ⁶⁷ Leading the way is the Northwest Territories (48 percent) followed by Quebec (44 percent), British Columbia (43 percent), Ontario (39 percent), Yukon (37 percent), Nova Scotia (31 percent), New Brunswick (29 percent), Saskatchewan (28 percent), Manitoba (26 percent), Nunuvut (23 percent), Newfoundland and Labrador (23 percent), and Prince Edward Island (22 percent).
- ⁶⁸ Ashe 2020(d). <https://blogs.lse.ac.uk/politicsandpolicy/candidate-selection-underrepresentation/>
- ⁶⁹ See the Gender Quotas Database <https://www.idea.int/data-tools/data/gender-quotas>
- ⁷⁰ In 2020, Kate Ryan-Lloyd was appointed the first woman Clerk of the Legislative Assembly of BC.
- ⁷¹ IPU 2017, 7.
- ⁷² Barnes and Munn-Rivard 2012; Munn-Rivard 2013.
- ⁷³ <https://www.ourcommons.ca/DocumentViewer/en/42-1/FEWO/report-14/page-5> .
- ⁷⁴ Ashe 2020(b).
- ⁷⁵ Arscott and Trimble 2013; Ashe 2020(b)(c); Bittner and Thomas 2017; Tremblay and Everitt; Grace 2016; Raney 2020.
- ⁷⁶ Interview with a parliamentarian, December 2020.
- ⁷⁷ Interview with a parliamentarian, December 2020.
- ⁷⁸ Interview with a parliamentarian, December 2020.

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- ⁷⁹ This discussion is informed by Ashe 2020(b); Collier and Raney 2018.
- ⁸⁰ This discussion is drawn from Ashe 2020(b).
- ⁸¹ <https://ipolitics.ca/2015/06/08/mps-new-sexual-harassment-policy-still-keeps-bad-behaviour-in-the-dark/>
- ⁸² Collier and Raney 2018, 796.
- ⁸³ Collier and Raney 2018, 803-10.
- ⁸⁴ <https://www.ourcommons.ca/About/StandingOrders/appa2-e.htm>
- ⁸⁵ Collier and Raney 2018, 803-4; 808.
- ⁸⁶ Collier and Raney 2018, 803-4.
- ⁸⁷ <https://www.ourcommons.ca/DocumentViewer/en/42-1/PROC/report-48>
- ⁸⁸ <https://www.ourcommons.ca/DocumentViewer/en/42-1/PROC/report-48>
- ⁸⁹ <https://www.macleans.ca/politics/ottawa/sexual-harassment-on-parliament-hill/>
- ⁹⁰ <https://www.samaracanada.com/research/cheering-or-jeering>
- ⁹¹ Collier and Raney 2018, 808.
- ⁹² <https://www.macleans.ca/politics/ottawa/sexual-harassment-on-parliament-hill/>
- ⁹³ <https://www.macleans.ca/politics/ottawa/sexual-harassment-on-parliament-hill/>
- ⁹⁴ <https://ipolitics.ca/2018/01/02/mps-share-stories-sexual-misconduct-off-parliament-hill/>
- ⁹⁵ Personal correspondence with Grace Lore April 2019; <https://www.ourcommons.ca/content/misc/2015-2016-PreventionReport-e.pdf>
- ⁹⁶ Ashe and Stewart, 2012.
- ⁹⁷ <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/new-brunswick/financial-incentive-women-candidates-1.4036359>
- ⁹⁸ Personal correspondence with Grace Lore, April 2019.
- ⁹⁹ But see Ashe(c).
- ¹⁰⁰ Personal correspondence with Grace Lore, April 2019; See Thomas and Bittner 2017.
- ¹⁰¹ Personal correspondence with Grace Lore, April 2019.
- ¹⁰² Personal correspondence with Grace Lore, April 2019; Samara 2016.
- ¹⁰³ Personal correspondence with the Legislative Assembly of British Columbia, December 2020.
- ¹⁰⁴ <https://globalnews.ca/news/5118439/c-legislature-dress-code-bare-arms-controversy/>
- ¹⁰⁵ <https://researchco.ca/2021/01/29/bcpoli-plecas-proposals/>
- ¹⁰⁶ Personal Correspondence with Grace Lore, April 2019; See Raney and Collier 2018.
- ¹⁰⁷ See CWP 2020.
- ¹⁰⁸ IPU 2011, 117.
- ¹⁰⁹ See Ashe(c) 2020.
- ¹¹⁰ Childs 2016; CWP 2020.
- ¹¹¹ Childs 2016, 6.
- ¹¹² Personal correspondence with Sarah Childs, December 2020.
- ¹¹³ See CWP 2020 for more information on these dimensions.
- ¹¹⁴ CWP 2020.
- ¹¹⁵ CWP 2020.
- ¹¹⁶ CWP 2020, 19.
- ¹¹⁷ Childs 2016, 8.
- ¹¹⁸ See Ashe(b) 2020.
- ¹¹⁹ Ashe 2020(b), 71.
- ¹²⁰ Childs 2016, 10.
- ¹²¹ Childs 2016, 11-12.
- ¹²² Childs 2016, 14.
- ¹²³ Childs 2016, 14.
- ¹²⁴ Childs 2016, 14.
- ¹²⁵ CWP 2020.
- ¹²⁶ <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/british-columbia/speaker-issues-update-of-dress-code-at-bc-legislature-1.5079979>

¹²⁷ The Dress Code was recently amended. As well, there has been a recent review of the Codes of Conduct, which led to a Respectful Workplace Policy. In 2001, a new parliamentary calendar was adopted to set dates for spring and fall sittings – providing improved certainty for Members’ legislative schedules. Also, in 2001, changes to BC’s Constitution Act set fixed terms election date every four years. In 2004 the Standing Orders were changed to eliminate Friday sittings and to provide members with an opportunity to return to their constituency and family at the close of the sitting week. Further changes to sitting hours also reduced the uncertainty and frequency of nights sittings. Personal correspondence with the Legislative Assembly of British Columbia, December 2020.

¹²⁸ Washroom facilities and other areas of the Parliament Buildings now have change tables for Members and visitors. Since 2013, Members or visitors with strollers may enter the building through the new Mowat accessible entrance. Within the last three years certain washrooms have been designated ‘gender-neutral’. Personal correspondence with the Legislative Assembly of British Columbia, December 2020.

¹²⁹ A review led to the right to have infants on the floor. On March 8, 2018, the Legislative Assembly adopted an amendment to Standing Order 23 that authorizes the presence of children in the House. The amendment applies to newborn and very young infants who require a Member’s care. The amendment stated: “A stranger does not include an infant being cared for by a Member.” The amendment to Standing Order 23 does not specifically address nursing, but as the provision is extended only to newborn and very young infants, it was recognised that nursing may occur from time to time. In February 2000, the Legislative Assembly Management Committee resolved that the Speaker would develop a “bereavement, sick, maternity and family leave policy for Members”. Later that year, an amendment to the Legislative Assembly Allowances and Pension Act extended approval of acceptable absences during a sessional period to include ‘reason of sickness or another reason approved by the Speaker’ – including maternity and family leave. In 2000, as there were a number of government and opposition members with infants, government and opposition caucuses undertook, separately, to re-allocate office space to better accommodate Members with nursing infants. Personal correspondence with the Legislative Assembly of British Columbia, December 2020.

¹³⁰ <https://news.gov.bc.ca/files/FIN-Lore-mandate.pdf>

¹³¹ Authors Sarah Childs and Sonia Palmieri.

¹³² <https://www.ipu.org/gender-and-covid-19-guidance-note-parliaments>; <https://www.ipu.org/gender-and-covid-19-guidance-note-parliaments>.

¹³³ CWP 2020, 3.

¹³⁴ CWP 2020, 3.

¹³⁵ CWP 2020, 3.

¹³⁶ See CWP 2020. The checklist is flexible and can be adjusted to include more diversity measures.