



Legislative Assembly of Alberta

The 28th Legislature
Second Session

Standing Committee
on
Legislative Offices

Thursday, July 3, 2014
10:02 a.m.

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Second Session**

Standing Committee on Legislative Offices

Jeneroux, Matt, Edmonton-South West (PC), Chair
McDonald, Everett, Grande Prairie-Smoky (PC), Deputy Chair

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DeLong, Alana, Calgary-Bow (PC)
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* substitution for Everett McDonald

Legislative Officers

Jill Clayton	Information and Privacy Commissioner
Del Graff	Child and Youth Advocate
Peter Hourihan	Ombudsman, Public Interest Commissioner
Glen Resler	Chief Electoral Officer
Merwan Saher	Auditor General
Marguerite Trussler, QC	Ethics Commissioner

Office of the Chief Electoral Officer Participant

Drew Westwater	Director, Election Operations and Communications
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Office of the Child and Youth Advocate Participants

Terri Davies	Director, Legal Representation and Quality Assurance
Bonnie Russell	Director, Strategic Support

Support Staff

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Robert H. Reynolds, QC	Law Clerk/Director of Interparliamentary Relations
Shannon Dean	Senior Parliamentary Counsel/ Director of House Services
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Tracey Sales	Communications Consultant
Janet Schwegel	Managing Editor of <i>Alberta Hansard</i>

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[Mr. Jeneroux in the chair]

The Chair: All right. We'll get started. We have quorum.

Well, this is my first meeting, so I'm excited. Thanks for welcoming me here.

We'll also just go around the table quickly, and then we'll head to the phone to get introductions.

Mr. Young: Good morning. Steve Young, MLA for Edmonton-Riverview.

Ms Blakeman: Good morning. Laurie Blakeman. I'd like to welcome each and every one of you to my fabulous constituency of Edmonton-Centre.

Ms Russell: Bonnie Russell from the office of the Child and Youth Advocate.

Mr. Graff: I'm Del Graff, the Child and Youth Advocate.

Ms Davies: Good morning. I'm Terri Davies. I'm from the office of the Child and Youth Advocate.

Mr. Eggen: Good morning. My name is David Eggen. I'm the MLA for Edmonton-Calder, with the Alberta New Democrats.

Mrs. Sawchuk: Karen Sawchuk, committee clerk.

The Chair: I'm the chair, Matt Jeneroux, MLA, Edmonton-South West.

And those on the phone?

Dr. Brown: Neil Brown.

Ms DeLong: This is Alana DeLong here, MLA for Calgary-Bow.

Mr. Wilson: Jeff Wilson, MLA, Calgary-Shaw.

Mr. Khan: Stephen Khan, MLA, St. Albert.

The Chair: Stephen, you are substituting?

Mr. Khan: Right. I'm sitting in for Everett McDonald. Thank you.

The Chair: Perfect. Great.

The typical housekeeping items: the microphone console is operated by *Hansard*; keep cellphones, iPhones, and BlackBerrys off the table as these may interfere with the audiofeed; and audio of the committee proceedings is streamed live on the Internet and recorded by *Hansard*.

We all have the agenda in front of us. Could I get a motion to move the agenda? Mr. Eggen. All in favour? Any opposed? Perfect.

The adoption of the minutes. There's just one change to the minutes. The minutes that were out there said "2014," but they should have said "2013." So with that correction, could I get a motion to approve the November 28, 2013, minutes? Ms Blakeman. All in favour? Any objections? Carried. Great.

Now, we have Mr. Del Graff and some staff here. We're here considering a request from the office of the Child and Youth Advocate for supplementary funding for 2014-15. Members should have a copy of Mr. Graff's letter dated June 20 as well as the attached supplementary estimate document.

Mr. Graff, please go ahead with your presentation. Keep it to about 15 minutes, and then we'll leave sufficient time for questions from the committee.

Office of the Child and Youth Advocate

Mr. Graff: Well, thank you, and good morning. I don't plan on taking 15 minutes. I may be about 10 or so, but that will leave more time for questions. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, for making the time to hear me this morning. I'm pleased to be here to discuss my request for additional resources for the office of the Child and Youth Advocate to fulfill the legislative requirements of our expanded mandate.

Before I begin, I'd like to introduce members of my staff who are joining us this morning. With me on my right is Terri Davies, who is our director of legal representation and quality assurance, and on my left is Bonnie Russell. She's our director of strategic support. They're going to help me with any technical questions that arise.

Mr. Chairman, this presentation will focus on our request for a supplementary estimate for 2014-15 to fulfill the expansion of our mandate. The expansion of our mandate is a direct result of the public attention on child deaths and the subsequent minister's round-table, held this past January.

As all of you are aware, the government of Alberta amended the Child and Youth Advocate Act during this past spring sitting. The amendments will allow my office to complete investigative reviews of the deaths of young people who received child intervention services within a two-year period preceding their deaths. We can learn valuable lessons from children who have been involved with the child intervention system following their experience with that system. There are circumstances where a child dies after receiving child intervention services. Reviewing the systemic issues arising from such a tragedy can provide important information to help improve the systems that serve young people.

When I spoke with the Minister of Human Services about the amendments, I conveyed to him that completing child death reviews within a specific time frame after receiving child intervention services would be a welcome addition to our work. This legislation is in place now. I think it's been in place since May 14. We started receiving reports and are currently working with the office of the Chief Medical Examiner and the Ministry of Human Services on establishing operational processes. I do anticipate an operational impact to our office based on this amendment.

From April 1, 2012, to March 31, 2013, our office received 20 reports of serious injury or death of young people served by child intervention services in the Ministry of Human Services. After going through examinations and assessments of case files, we issued four investigative review reports and have one more that's close to being released.

From April 1, 2013, to March 31, 2014, our office received 35 reports of serious injury or death of young people in care. There has been an upward trend in the number of serious injury or death review notifications for our office, and these numbers don't include the amendments to the Child and Youth Advocate Act, which broaden the scope of my mandate.

Based on the data that the Ministry of Human Services has provided to our office on the number of young people that have left care in the past two years, we estimate that an additional 25 to 30 reports of deaths will be received in a given year. This represents a significant increase in reports from previous years. This would also increase the number of examinations, assess-

ments, and full investigations for our office, and that's why I'm here today.

For the 2014-15 fiscal year, covering the seven-month period from September 1 to March 31, we are requesting a supplementary budget amount of \$730,000. This increase will provide \$311,000 for salary and benefits for five new full-time equivalent employees. These will include three new investigators and two systemic and research analysts. Our submission also includes moving the current budget and a position from advocacy services to quality assurance and investigations for a quality assurance manager. We are also requesting \$250,000 for contracted services for investigations, to cover expert panel member fees and travel and the production and printing of investigative reports. As well, we're asking for \$69,000 to address travel costs, supplies, and telecommunications for the new staff. We're also requesting \$100,000 in capital funding for the development of an information management system for investigations.

Our original 2014-2015 budget estimates had included an increase for in-range salary adjustments only, and all other areas within our budget were held without increases. We are confident that with this supplementary budget estimate of \$730,000 we'll be able to deliver our new mandate as outlined in the amendments to the Child and Youth Advocate Act.

10:10

Mr. Chairman, investing an additional \$730,000 in the business of the office of the Child and Youth Advocate will ensure that quality services are available to Alberta's most vulnerable children and youth population. I am committed to the young people that my office serves, and we will continue to advocate on their behalf so that they can receive the support they need to make positive progress in their lives.

Thank you once again for enabling me to have some time on your agenda and for the opportunity to meet with you today. I'll be happy to respond to any questions that you might have.

The Chair: Great. Okay. We'll now open it up to questions.

Mr. Eggen: Thank you for your presentation. Certainly, the Alberta New Democrats support an increase in funding in keeping with the expansion of your mandate. I just have a couple of questions around how you want to pursue that. I'm getting a sense that, considering what we've given you, increasing the mandate – I'm wondering if this is adequate funding, right? My first question is: of the 34 deaths and injuries that Human Services is reporting for 2013-14, how many do you figure will go to investigation?

Mr. Graff: It would be a difficult question to answer at this point in terms of how many I think will go that far. What I do know is that of the deaths that were in the previous year, the year before that, the serious injuries and deaths, there were five, so about 25 per cent of them, that went to a full investigation.

Mr. Eggen: Okay. To what degree does your funding limit the choices you make about moving a file to investigation?

Mr. Graff: I wouldn't suggest that today the funding is what is the deciding factor in terms of that decision-making. The decisions about whether or not we proceed are based primarily on the file information that we have, and they will get backed up as opposed to not being done. There's a backlog that can be generated because of that, and the backlog can be related to resources, but certainly the decision to have an investigative review isn't one that's driven by the funding. It's driven by the circumstances.

Mr. Eggen: Okay.

Mr. Graff: Just as a point of clarification, maybe I'd ask Terri to describe where we are currently with the numbers from the previous year in terms of investigative reviews, assessments, and examinations. Is that possible?

Ms Davies: Sure. We have an investigation that's almost completed that will come out probably within the next two months, and that one is from the first fiscal year that we had in our report. We have an additional seven that have been approved for investigation and are at various phases. I have 11 open to assessment, so we feel that there was enough information in the screening report to ask for all of the files. So the investigators are going through all of the file information on another 11. We currently have four, that we've received over the last month or so, that are at the examination phase. We're looking at the electronic record and doing some collateral contacts because we feel that it's important to not get our information just from the Ministry of Human Services. There's contact being made with police services or Health to help us decide whether or not we need to proceed.

Mr. Eggen: Okay. Yeah. I just want to, you know, ensure that we can get adequate information that's available both to your office and to legislators and to the public – right? – on these cases that don't make it past the screening phase or the initial assessment, as you might call it. We did some calculating based on last year's numbers, very conservative estimates, that we're budgeting at least \$3 million less than necessary for that line item 4, that you have there, that allows the cases to proceed to full investigation. I just don't want to have you up here and have a circumstance of underfunding that would limit your capacity to investigate in the best possible way, right? That's all.

The Chair: Any questions on the phone?

Dr. Brown: I'm good.

Mr. Wilson: We're good. Thank you.

The Chair: Steve.

Mr. Young: Yeah. My question is around your information management system – I mean, API3: we wasted \$85 million on that – I see \$100,000. I don't know. Is that too little, too much? Are you buying a laptop? I mean, I know investigations, and I know systems. Do you have some more detail on that?

Ms Russell: We have been working with a consultant lately to look at our needs with respect to tracking information. What we're looking at is a system that has a case management component. We're not looking for a really big, robust system that is going to cost us millions of dollars because we don't have the capacity to be able to do that. We're looking for a system that will be able to help us manage the investigations or the reports as they come in and be able to track the information within that system, things such as interviews and our reports, et cetera, and our recommendations.

Mr. Young: Is this like E&R III, the system that you're buying?

Ms Russell: Well, we're in the midst of actually looking at systems right now, so we haven't received the recommendations from the consultant right at this point.

Mr. Young: My other question is: how does this align with the other information management systems that we have in all of government? Right now we're a victim of everybody creating silos of information and redundancy. We talk of shared service, but it doesn't happen. Is that part of your consideration, where you fit with the rest of government as opposed to just creating your own IT information silo?

Ms Russell: One of the challenges that we have is that a number of the systems that are out there host outside of Alberta, and we are not in a position to host outside of Alberta – for example, there are some other systems in some other leg. offices that we have worked with to look at what they are using, and in some cases they are being hosted outside of Alberta – so those aren't options for us. That is a huge consideration.

When you talk about IT, we are in a situation right now where we are sharing IT infrastructure with the office of the Ombudsman, the Public Interest Commissioner, and the Ethics Commissioner. That was one of the initiatives that we put in place in the past two years.

Mr. Young: So this 100 K, is that basically a target as you go down that process, or is that an actual cost? You just said that you're going through the process of working with vendors.

Ms Russell: Right. So this is the actual cost of the system, whether it be licensing, which then would require some customization – we are not looking to create or develop our own system. We're looking for something that's off the shelf.

Mr. Young: Okay.

My other question is: the quality assurance framework, is that an audit process or auditing? You have the \$250,000 for contract services, and then you have quality assurance. Is that for investigation audits or spell-checking?

Mr. Graff: I'm just looking for it here.

Mr. Young: To me, a proper information management system, that you're creating, has that. It's fundamental. It's germane to your system. So I'm just wondering: is that something different, the quality assurance framework?

Mr. Graff: Yes. The quality assurance framework for our organization is an organization-wide framework, and our information management portion is one part of that framework. We also speak in that framework to the standards that we'd expect in our service delivery across the organization, to the interplay between advocacy and legal representation for children and investigations as part of a broad quality assurance framework. So our investigations, the database, if you will, will contribute to our quality assurance across the organization. This is specifically for the investigations section.

10:20

Mr. Young: Okay. Like my colleague here, I think that we need to have proper funding, the proper amount to deliver on your services, but we've hired five more people, and then you're contracting out. Why the contracting and not hiring? Is this for, like, ad hoc kind of big investigations?

Mr. Graff: Well, there are a couple of key areas where we use contracting in investigations. One of them is that when we do an investigative review and we identify areas where there are systemic issues – and we need to have findings and recommendations that emerge from those areas – we bring together people with

expertise in those given areas to engage in a dialogue with us, and we compensate those individuals for that work. For example, we've had circumstances where there's been a young person who died by suicide. Issues related to suicide are a critical part of our recommendations, so we would contract with an individual, for example, from the University of British Columbia who's an authority on youth suicide for children who are involved with intervention assistance. That person would provide us with advice about how to formulate findings and recommendations to best suit the circumstances and to serve children better as a result. Those types of resources are all kind of done through contracts.

The other area of contracting for us is just the cost of having writers and printers and the folks that actually do the work of putting our information into a publicly consumable document. So those types of things are also contracted costs for us.

Mr. Young: Thank you very much.

Thank you, Chair. Those are all of my questions.

The Chair: Perfect.

Ms Blakeman.

Ms Blakeman: Thanks very much. Can I just confirm that the additional funding that you've requested, \$730,000 I think it was, is to obviously cover the five people that you've now put in place and, I'm assuming, some continued operations in the future, possibly even some enhancement or enlargement of the services that are provided? How far have you gone with that? Is this budget just to cover where you are right now, or is it to carry you forward into the future? Is it to cover two or three years' worth of expected grid increases, or is it expected to cover a 10 per cent increase in staff? How far is this going to take you? To put it bluntly, when do we expect to see you back looking for an increase?

Mr. Graff: That's a good question. I can speak in general terms, and then I'd ask Bonnie to speak to the specifics. This request is for a period of time of seven months, from September 1 to March 31. It isn't a request that, in fact, goes beyond that date. Perhaps Bonnie could clarify what the annualized amount would be.

Ms Russell: The annualized amount is \$987,000. That excludes the addition of the \$100,000 that we see as one time for capital. The \$987,000 does take into consideration for those five individuals a 2 and a quarter per cent increase for 2015-16.

Mr. Graff: Just to clarify, this is not a one-time only cost. There will be ongoing costs connected to this.

Ms Blakeman: Good. I'm glad I clarified this. This really is to take you to the end of this fiscal year, and you will be back in front of us with a different budget, with numbers that have this rolled in, for the fiscal year beginning April 1, 2015.

Mr. Graff: That's right.

Ms Blakeman: Good. Thank you.

The Chair: Mr. Eggen.

Mr. Eggen: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I just was again pursuing the capacity that we're trying to build for your office here. I'm just curious to know how you arrived at the five FTE numbers and \$599,000. You know, is there some assumption about caseload, total number of cases reported, and the ones that will be investigated? Like, I'm just wondering. You know, ultimately, it

looks like there are 34 cases coming your way this year. Is this sufficient capacity to investigate those?

Mr. Graff: Our calculations were based on what we envisioned to be the increase in the work as a result of the expansion of the mandate, not an expansion of the . . .

Ms Blakeman: Volume?

Mr. Graff: . . . volume that each individual worker would provide. To do the same amount of work that we currently do, with this expansion in numbers, this is what we anticipate as the FTEs required. We're not suggesting that we're going to do a greater percentage of investigative reviews or a lesser percentage of investigative reviews. We're going to keep the percentages constant. That's what this information is based on. If today 25 per cent of our investigative reports result in investigative reviews, then this is based on, in the future, 25 per cent of that greater number being investigative reviews.

Mr. Eggen: Right. Okay. Thank you.

The Chair: Great.

I just want to check the phone lines one more time.

Mr. Khan: Mr. Young has asked most of my questions. Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

The Chair: Ms Blakeman.

Ms DeLong: I've got one more question in terms of funding for the . . .

The Chair: Alana, we'll just take Ms Blakeman's question and then go to you if that's okay.

Ms DeLong: Okay.

The Chair: Thanks.

Ms Blakeman: Moving on from the question and answer that just occurred, there's no volume increase here, but we're constantly told that – someone's going to correct me here – every month another town the size of something or another moves into Alberta. We continue to have a fairly significant population increase. It's steady enough that we can take it to the bank. I mean, with that increased population there's going to be a percentage increase that will end up in your office. Has that been accounted for?

Mr. Graff: Maybe you should answer the question.

Ms Russell: We haven't taken it into account in this, but we took population increase into account when we built our budget initially, with respect to advocacy services.

Ms Blakeman: That didn't answer my question. Your original budget does take population growth into account, but once we add this piece in, it doesn't?

Mr. Graff: For this supplementary estimate we're not including a population increase; what we're including is the expansion of the mandate. That's really what this has been based on.

Ms Blakeman: Okay. Yeah.

Mr. Graff: It's not been based on the population of Alberta changing, not for this. We anticipate that when we come to this committee on a regular basis, those shifts in terms of population

and their impact in relation to our service and our budget will be part of what we have as a submission. But for this what we do know is that there are already young people who are in this expanded mandate, if you will, who are coming to our attention, and we need to have the resources to deal with that need over the next seven-month period. We anticipate some shifts coming along with that expansion of population. That's, as I understand it, pretty inevitable.

Ms Blakeman: Yeah. Okay. Got it: keep concentrating on the fact that this is asking for funding from the first of September to the end of March, Laurie, and try not to make it more than that. Have I got that?

Mr. Graff: Yes. Thank you.

Ms Blakeman: Yes, Laurie, you do.

Thanks.

The Chair: Okay. Great.

We'll go to Alana, and then, hopefully, we'll move on. We have the electoral officer just waiting outside. Go ahead, Alana.

Ms DeLong: Hi. I just wanted to ask one question. It's regarding the computer system that you're looking at. How much of that budget is for purchasing a package, and do you have sufficient numbers there in terms of the training for the package and the adjustment of people just learning how to use a new system?

10:30

Mr. Graff: I'd ask Bonnie if she could respond to that question.

Ms Russell: This hundred thousand dollars is primarily around what an off-the-shelf system would be, licensing as well as any customization that would have to be done. At this point in time we're looking – you know, this is already July. By the time we would be able to have a system, it would be close to the end of the year, so there would be a very limited amount of effort for training at this point.

Ms DeLong: Oh, okay. Thanks so much.

The Chair: Thanks, Alana.

Mr. Wilson: Mr. Chair, if I could just make one comment, please.

The Chair: We have David Eggen, quickly, and then you right after him.

Mr. Eggen: Thank you. Just one last very quick question. Do you have any estimate or educated sort of guess as to how many more cases will be investigated of deaths of children within two years? We just would like to get a sense. I just don't want to undercut your capacity here in this opportunity.

Mr. Graff: Our challenge with estimates is to try to be accurate or try to have some way of assessing the potential, and really the only measure that we have is what we've done in the past, which is that 25 per cent window. That's really as much as we can say about the potential.

The assessments that Terri was alluding to in her response, the 11 assessments, are assessments where we're gathering information to come to a determination about whether an investigative review takes place. There can be differences in terms of those cases that would drive those decisions that don't stick with that percentage.

Mr. Eggen: Okay. Fair enough. Thank you.

The Chair: Great. Okay.

Jeff, go ahead.

Mr. Wilson: Thanks, Mr. Chair. Really quickly, I just wanted to say that I believe that the last time your office met with this committee, Mr. Graff, we attempted to give you more money, and you politely declined. I believe that your office has been a good steward of taxpayer dollars, and I believe that this ask is reasonable, considering your increased mandate. I will be happily supporting it.

Mr. Graff: Well, thank you very much.

The Chair: Great. Okay. Thank you.

On behalf of the committee thank you, Mr. Graff and your staff, for attending today. The committee will be making its decision and will notify you in writing in the next few days.

Mr. Graff: Okay. Thank you.

The Chair: For those of you on the phone, just a minute, and we'll bring in Mr. Resler.

Office of the Chief Electoral Officer

The Chair: Thank you and welcome, Mr. Resler. You're appearing for the first time before this committee in your new role, so congratulations. To your staff at the committee as well, thank you for spending the time here today.

As you know, in addition to those of us here around the room, we also have a number of us on the phone who will be asking questions. I'll let you know who's on the phone so that you have a heads-up. We have MLA Khan, MLA Wilson, MLA Brown, and MLA DeLong.

Gary Bikman, are you on the phone? No. Okay.

All right. The committee is considering a number of issues from the office of the Chief Electoral Officer, including a request for supplementary funding. Members should have copies of Mr. Resler's correspondence dated June 27 outlining the issues for the committee's consideration as well as documents titled Procedure for the Use of Tabulators and Voter Assist Terminals, Automated Advance Poll, and the recommended legislative amendments. For those of you on the phone, Karen just e-mailed out the package of the PowerPoint again to your personal e-mails if you don't have it already.

Mr. Resler, go ahead. We'll give you 45 minutes. Hopefully, you can get through all that, and then we'll take questions from the committee.

Mr. Resler: Good morning and thank you, Mr. Chair and committee members, for the opportunity to speak with you today. Assisting me is Drew Westwater, to my left, director of election operations and communications, and to my right is Keila Johnston, director of IT and geomatics.

When I interviewed for the CEO position, several members of this committee also participated on the search committee, and when asked about my vision for Elections Alberta, I stressed the need to leverage technology in modernizing the voting process, including the use of vote tabulators and introducing the vote anywhere concept. I also identified opportunities to introduce best practices and to collaborate with municipalities now that they're on an alternate four-year electoral cycle.

Today I would like to discuss several items that we have identified as necessary to move forward with this vision, including a request for supplementary funding. These proposals will increase the efficiency and effectiveness of election administration and increase the services and accessibility for stakeholders. They are: using vote tabulators in advance polls and voter assist terminals in returning officer offices; modernizing the advance poll process through automation; enabling the vote anywhere concept; supplementary funding will be looking at preparing for the potential of an early general election; and also suggested legislative changes prior to and post election. Because of the overlap with some of these proposals, if the committee agrees, I would like to present on all items before opening the floor to any questions.

The first item. Committee members have been provided with a copy of the procedures for use of tabulators and voter assist terminals. In compliance with section 4.1 of the Election Act if new equipment or procedures are introduced, approval of the procedures by the standing committee is required.

A vote tabulator is a digital optical scanning machine that reads and records how ballots are marked, deposits them into a ballot box, stores the voting information, and reports the voting results after the close of polls. Members may be already familiar with these tabulators as several Alberta municipalities use them during municipal elections: Wood Buffalo, St. Albert, Strathcona county, and Red Deer. Edmonton has used them since 1995. We wish to use vote tabulators in the advance polls to accommodate the high volume of ballots cast and the increased time commitment required by election staff to count the ballots. This will result in increased accuracy, timely reporting of unofficial results, and efficiencies in processing the ballots.

When we compare the 2008 and 2012 provincial general elections, the legislation was amended to allow any elector to vote at the advance polls. There was no longer a restriction to voting during this period. As a result, we experienced almost 30 per cent higher elector volumes at the advance polls. When we look at the next general election, legislation has been amended to extend the advance polls from three to four days. We anticipate another significant increase in electors who choose the convenience and flexibility offered by the advance poll period.

10:40

In addition to the tabulators, we are requesting to use voter assist terminals. That will enable electors with disabilities to independently and privately command a voter assist terminal to mark their ballot. This includes a Braille-coded keypad, touch screen, pressure-sensitive paddles, and sipping-puffing straw.

We wish to partner with the city of Edmonton's election and census office in the use of this equipment. We are currently in discussions with the city to piggyback on an RFP process that is currently under way that will allow Elections Alberta to test the equipment. If satisfied with its use, we would be able to proceed with a contractual arrangement.

The cost to implement during a by-election can be absorbed within the current budgetary provisions. When we look at implementing during a provincial general election, the increased costs would be offset by the savings of moving from a door-to-door enumeration to a mail-based enumeration in which electors are able to update their information online, by mail, or by phone.

The procedure document was distributed in advance for your review, and it outlines the use of vote tabulators and voter assist terminals. Therefore, I'll not go through the document itself and will entertain questions after we have completed our presentation. I am requesting the committee's approval of the procedure

document for the use of tabulators and voter assist terminals in the next provincial by-election.

On the second item we have consulted with Rob Reynolds, Law Clerk and director of interparliamentary relations, and with Alberta Justice to confirm that the automated advance poll process is in compliance with current legislation. Mr. Reynolds – and he may speak to this himself – feels that I already have the authority under the Election Act and also by the application of the Electronic Transactions Act to have election documents in electronic form. Although we have the ability to automate advance polls without the committee's approval, I feel that it's important to provide the committee with the direction we are taking to modernize electoral processes.

Currently there is a short turnaround time to prepare the list of electors for polling day after the close of advance polls. Historically elections have been held on a Monday, which gives the returning officers one day, Sunday, to prepare and distribute the list. Typically, this involves the advance poll deputy returning officers phoning the returning officer to relay who has voted. The RO then manually crosses off each elector from the list. The consolidated poll book is then distributed for the opening of polls on election day.

This manual process is very time consuming, and the repetition of information can allow for mistakes to be made. In addition, the 30 per cent increase in the use of advance polls has significantly impacted the volume of manual processing. Adding a fourth day to the advance poll will increase the volume even more. Automating the list of electors during advance polls will allow for real-time management of the list, reduce the potential for errors, and allow for improved service to electors.

Taking a look at the flow chart, there are two streams of activity at the polling place: electors that are on the list of electors and those that are not. In both instances the information officer will confirm whether or not the elector is on the list. If the person is on the list, the elector proceeds to the poll to vote whereas the person not registered to vote has the extra step of registering with the registration officer prior to voting.

The slides that were provided to you show the process of an elector with a where-to-vote card. The elector provides the where-to-vote card to the information officer, who then confirms that they are registered at the correct address. The elector is then directed to the next available polling station.

We will set up the polling place similar to a bank, where people line up for the first available table for service. The elector will provide the where-to-vote card to the poll clerk, and the poll clerk will scan the bar code that you see in the top right corner of the where-to-vote card. The elector's name is automatically listed on the computer screen as a recent arrival, information is confirmed, and the poll clerk selects the elector. A ballot is provided to the elector by the deputy returning officer, and if the elector requires any assistance or other activities, it is documented by the poll clerk; for example, the use of a blind-voter template, interpreter, friend of voter, those types of documents. The elector then goes to vote.

The elector returns with his or her ballot, and the poll clerk selects the elector from the voting queue that you see on the screen. Then all necessary voting details are recorded, and the elector is marked as voted. The elector then is moved to the recently voted section, where the poll clerk has the opportunity to make corrections if required. This process we just walked through, of automating the poll book at the advance poll, can be done without a change in legislation, but the current legislation does not allow for voting anywhere outside of the electoral division.

This last slide shows how the system is capable of being used to accommodate the vote anywhere concept in the advance poll. The poll clerk is able to search for any elector in any electoral division, no different than the process that we just walked through. The poll book is automatically updated in real time across the province, denoting the elector as voted. The left-hand column shows how the electoral division and polling subdivision combination of the elector will show up. As part of the vote anywhere vote tabulator process, when we combine the two at all advance polls, we would be able to generate a ballot on demand for each electoral division in the province and generate the unofficial results for all vote anywhere ballots at the close of polls on election night. There would not be a delay in receiving the unofficial results.

Vote anywhere will allow for polls to be set up in postsecondary institutions, work camps, and in high-traffic areas such as malls or recreational centres, where electors are able to vote no matter where they reside. It'll provide convenience to electors able to vote near work, school, or home. It eliminates a barrier to participating. Parties and candidates are able to receive real-time access to lists of electors who have voted for each day of advance polling. Scrutineers can receive hourly printouts of those who have voted at the advance poll, and it'll cut down on the use of special ballots.

The automated advance poll, vote anywhere, system will not be ready until 2016. Any by-election or potential early general election will continue with the paper process currently in place. In order to accommodate the vote anywhere concept in the 2016 provincial general election, legislative changes are required. The hardware costs to implement advance poll automation, including the bar code scanners, laptops, printers, hubs, Internet access, are estimated at \$1.1 million. Savings achieved in moving to the mail-based enumerations can also be reallocated to pay for automating the advance poll process.

The next item on the agenda is supplementary funding. This funding request is to allow our office to advance general election preparations should a provincial general election be called prior to 2016. As a result of the leadership contest, we need to prepare for both a by-election and the potential for an early general election. The supplementary funding does not cover the full cost of running an election.

Funding would be limited to stocking our warehouse at \$340,000; recruiting, training, and appointing returning officers and election clerks, starting in September, a total cost of \$193,000. We are also looking to update the register of electors through a mail-based enumeration to all residential addresses in Alberta in the fall of 2014, which will be supported by a centralized call centre. Enumeration cost is approximately \$1.5 million, and the call centre is an additional \$67,000. The total supplementary funding request is for \$2,110,000. If an election was to be called early, we would request a special warrant to cover the remaining expenses.

Once the September leadership vote is completed, we have a window of time to determine whether we need to perform this fall enumeration, so although we may receive the supplementary funding, it may not be expended.

10:50

Changes to election legislation lie solely with the authority of the mandate of the Legislative Assembly. My role is to make recommendations respecting amendments to the legislation. Currently I am limited in modernizing the electoral process and introducing best practices that reflect the increasing expectations of electors and stakeholders. The electoral legislation has been amended in a piecemeal fashion over the last 37 years. It is very

prescriptive. It needs to be enabling and updated in plain language that is easily understood and interpreted.

I respectfully request the support of the committee for a comprehensive review of both the Election Act and the Election Finances and Contributions Disclosure Act by a committee of the Legislature within two years after the next general election. This comprehensive review is consistent with legislation of other legislative offices such as the Ethics Commissioner, the Child and Youth Advocate, the Privacy Commissioner, and the Public Interest Commissioner.

In the interim I have several recommendations for legislative amendments for consideration prior to the 2016 provincial general election. These changes will allow for the modernization of electoral administration, strengthen the integrity and accuracy of the register of electors, and increase transparency. I have circulated a recommendations document that includes changes to both pieces of legislation.

If we take a look at the Election Act amendments, item 1 deals with the ability to introduce new equipment and procedures into elections. Currently I'm restricted to introducing change during a by-election, and bringing in the tabulators was the first point that we discussed. By-elections do not occur on a regular basis in Alberta. The last one was in 2009. I am requesting the ability to introduce changes at any election.

Item 2. There have been challenges, when I am carrying out an investigation, on whether I have the authority to request electronic records such as e-mails or records in electronic format. We require the authority to access records in whatever format they are stored or maintained, and this point would apply under both pieces of legislation.

Items 3 and 4 deal with the register of electors. In order to ensure the integrity and accuracy of the register, ultimately the list of electors, we need date of birth, gender, and citizenship to be mandatory data for electors to be added to the register. We have moved away from a province-wide, door-to-door process of enumerations and update the register by matching electors through regular updates from several data sources. We cannot match electors effectively or with accuracy without this data. Currently we have thousands of elector records without this data, and we're unable to match them. Most are likely duplicate records and continue to show up on your list of electors. Several other jurisdictions have already made this change. But I do want to make it clear that should an elector not wish to provide the information, they would still be able to vote, but they would not be added to the register after polling day.

Item 4 deals with the six-month residency clause. Again, when we receive data updates from data suppliers such as Revenue Canada, we have to ensure the information is six months old before we can load it into our system, because we do not know if the person has resided in Alberta for six months. So if this data is received prior to an election, the list of electors we provide to you as candidates would not be updated from this data source. We are requesting the six-month clause be deleted and that the requirement is for an elector to be resident in Alberta and would have to provide their residency through identification showing a local address.

Item 5 deals with several sections of the act using the words "physical incapacity." We have been asked by several organizations representing the community to revise the phrase to "physical disability."

Item 6. With the additional day for advance polls, we need to include Thursday to the list of advance poll days where a ballot box is to be sealed. It's just a housekeeping matter for that one.

Items 7 and 8 deal with the special ballot. We are requesting the ability to extend the timeline to request a special ballot to the beginning of the campaign period, starting on February 1. This will allow for additional days for the delivery of a mailed special ballot package and the timely return of that package. We also request the ability to reduce the timeline for requesting that special ballot by mail to close when the advance polls open. This change recognizes that the package may be received by the elector prior to the election, but inadequate time exists for the package to be returned to the returning officer on time. There would not be a time restriction for an elector requesting a special ballot in person, and this is also consistent with other jurisdictions.

Item 8. Currently, if an elector requests a special ballot in person at the returning officer's office, identification is requested, documented, and photocopied. If the same elector registered at their polling place, the identification would be requested and documented. No photocopies would be kept. The same process of not requiring to take photocopies of ID should be applied to the special ballot process when requests are received in person.

Item 9. Returning officers are restricted until after nomination day from meeting with officials in treatment centres and supportive living facilities to determine if mobile polls are required. We wish to eliminate the restriction of waiting 10 days before contact can take place.

Item 10. One of the biggest complaints we receive is regarding the use of election advertising at the polling place. Currently the legislation restricts the display to the inside or outside of the building used for the polling place. We are requesting to expand the restriction to include the land immediately surrounding the building used as the polling place. For a school, as an example, it would include the school grounds and parking areas, but it would not affect private residences across the street.

Item 11. This is one amendment that we did not provide you in your handout, and it deals with the advance poll, vote anywhere, process that we discussed earlier. We would need to revise several sections of the act that currently restrict procedures, limiting it right now to one specific electoral division. Amendments are required dealing with processes such as the production of ballots by the RO, voting procedures, unofficial and official counts, and reporting. So we are requesting amendments to accommodate an advance poll, vote anywhere, process.

Moving to the Election Finances and Contributions Disclosure Act, item 1, there are several groups or corporations that are prohibited from making political contributions. Establishing a regulation that identifies these publicly funded corporations would enhance clarity, understanding, and compliance by contributors, recipients, and the public.

Items 2 and 3 deal with confidentiality restrictions under the legislation. If I undertake an investigation of a constituency association or a candidate, I am unable to disclose this to their political party. I request the ability to disclose these matters to their respective parties.

If I find that there is an overcontribution and I make an order stating that monies are to be returned and the official tax receipts cancelled or replaced with lower amounts, I am unable to inform Alberta Treasury Board and Finance, the body responsible for ensuring that tax credits are claimed appropriately. I request the ability to disclose any changes to the official tax receipts to the department.

Items 4 and 5 deal with independent candidates of a provincial general election and senatorial selection. We request to harmonize the commencement date for independent candidates and party candidates. This will allow all candidates to accept contributions and use any funds during the campaign period.

Items 6 through 8 deal with third-party advertising. I would like to extend third-party advertising provisions to by-elections. I would like to add that a failure to register as a third party be a prosecutable offence. Currently I can only prosecute if it is a registered third party.

The last legislative amendment recommendation is that I'd like to include an offence section for groups as they currently cannot be prosecuted. That would close a loophole that currently exists in the legislation.

We are requesting that these legislative amendments be in place by spring 2015 in order to prepare for a 2016 provincial general election.

11:00

In closing, I would like to emphasize that our mandate has a requirement to embrace partnership opportunities and innovative ideas by adopting best practices and new technologies. The current legislative framework does not allow us to respond to the changing needs of our stakeholders and to the opportunities through technology. We are excited about the opportunities presented this morning, and we hope that the committee is supportive of our requests.

Thank you.

The Chair: Well, Mr. Resler, you've been busy. Thank you for your presentation.

We'll open up the floor to questions. Actually, before we do that, let's introduce another member who has joined us here.

Mrs. Leskiw: Sorry I'm late, but I was at the Ethics Commissioner's office at 10. Genia Leskiw, MLA, Bonnyville-Cold Lake.

The Chair: Good morning. Perfect.

We have one question so far. Steve.

Mr. Young: Yeah. A couple of questions. With regard to the advance polls, those becoming a larger part, you mentioned a 30 per cent increase. When we do the after-election report, that chunk in the poll report of advance polls keeps getting bigger and bigger. Is there any intent, even if you voted in the advance polls, to tie in their actual poll to that? Especially when you vote anywhere, are we going to lose the whole poll piece of the identification of when you vote?

Mr. Westwater: Mr. Chairman, through you to the member, we would record who has voted from which electoral division, and that would be available on the daily reports, from which polling subdivision and from which electoral division they voted. So you wouldn't lose that.

Mr. Young: Okay. Right now the advance poll by each constituency is one big chunk, and they're not represented in their poll where they actually reside. As that becomes a bigger and bigger issue, is it just going to be one big constituency number? You know, right now we have the division by polls. My hope is that even if you vote at the advance poll, there is still a distinction of what poll you're in.

Mr. Westwater: For election night reporting that would not be available, but certainly when you get copies of the poll records after the election, which we started for the first time last election and was made available to all the parties, we have a record of everyone who has voted and whether they voted at the advance poll or on polling day. But there would be no separate reporting of from which ED, how many – we could break it down that way if that's something that would of interest to you: from which ED,

vote anywhere, the advance polls. That's a statistic we'd probably report on when we did that.

Mr. Young: As we're growing this vote anywhere advance polls piece, what poll they would actually be in seems to be lost for those who will vote in the advance poll, and my hope is that the reporting captures that nonetheless.

Mr. Resler: That is correct as far as reporting of polls because the advance poll is a poll, right? It's reported individually, no differently than if they voted in poll 1 or 20, whatever poll. When you capture the number of electors and the number of votes cast, that poll will show that total amount and isn't necessarily broken down by each individual polling subdivision in which they would have normally voted. It's no different than the special-ballot process, which doesn't break it down either.

Mr. Young: Yeah. I guess in those cases, where they actually reside, that data, is lost in the big Other category.

Mr. Resler: It is. We do track that information, though, so we will have that specific information. I guess that's something that we can take under advisement and look at it to see what other options are available in reporting. You know, I can't quite visualize it right now.

Mr. Young: I guess the numbers are not that big, but what I see with your proposals is that it's not only the 30 per cent increase but the vote anywhere, so the data, I think, is going to be watered down into a big Other category.

Mr. Resler: Yes. Absolutely.

Mr. Young: Thank you.

The next question. You mentioned about the identification of gender. I don't know if you've been following this, but that may be a bit of an issue. You sort of had the caveat on there that they don't have to provide that, especially when gender has become not as rigid as we once thought. I think we need to align with those policies that we see with registries and stuff, where gender has become a choice, not one you switch daily but, certainly, one that is not . . .

Mr. Resler: That's where it is very important to have the date of birth, you know, and that would probably include the name change also. We do receive updates from Service Alberta on that type of information, but without the date of birth, it becomes even more difficult. It becomes very difficult in a situation like that, and that's why it's necessary.

Mr. Young: At the end of the day we're trying to make sure that we have the right person before us. I mean, I was very familiar with this when I was in policing. You know, all these things that you mentioned are characteristics of the person. I know that Service Alberta is moving towards this direction of e-government and the convergence of your Alberta health care card, your driver's licence number, all these pieces. My hope as we go down this path is that we sort of merge into that process, that we're not having all these different ID numbers and characteristics – I am who I am by any name or description, whether I'm voting, going to school, getting a driver's licence or ticket, whatever the process is that I'm involved in with the government – that we have that sort of convergence of that identification. That's an evolving process. I'm just saying that I hope your office is sort of part of that with Service Alberta.

Mr. Resler: Yes. We've already initiated discussions on that.

Mr. Young: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Those are all my questions. And thank you very much for your presentation.

Mr. Resler: Thank you.

The Chair: Wonderful. Just so everybody knows, I have Blakeman, Eggen, Neil Brown, and then after that we'll go to the phone if that's okay with everybody.

So go ahead, Laurie.

Ms Blakeman: Thank you. I have a couple of questions. I'll go through them quickly. My understanding is that at this point what you are asking for is amendments to the legislation that would allow you to make changes for vote anywhere and the voter assist terminals and the automated advance polls only at the advanced polls or at the offices of the DROs but not the general election.

Mr. Resler: Returning officers. Correct.

Ms Blakeman: Okay. Good.

I'm going to have trouble with your door-to-door thing again and by mail. Are you planning to do any specialized door-to-door enumeration for special places that are sometimes harder to love like Edmonton-Centre?

Mr. Resler: Yes. The mail-based enumeration will be targeted across the whole province. It will be supplemented by targeted, door-to-door enumeration, so high mobility areas, areas that change on a recurring basis and that, the downtowns, Edmonton-Calgary transient populations. Absolutely.

Ms Blakeman: Okay. Good. Glad to hear that.

When you are sending those mail cards, is that direct mail, so it's got somebody's name on it? Okay.

I also had the issue of gender. I think for me the issue is more – I mean, I'd like to move to a place where that isn't an identifier, but at a minimum we need to have it easy and not subjective when someone does change their gender. Now, you just said that it would automatically come to you through Service Alberta as soon as someone registered it there. In fact, am I correct that an individual would not have to then approach you to change their M to an F or whatever for their voter purposes? You're going to know about it, whatever happens?

Mr. Resler: It's a timing issue, obviously, depending on when that change occurred and whether it's implemented into the list, the register, and ultimately the list prior to an election, but yes.

Ms Blakeman: Okay. Last two. In the third-party ads you talk about expanding on groups, and I've got a question mark. If you'd like to expand on what you mean by expanding on groups.

11:10

Mr. Resler: Groups are defined under the legislation. Third parties can be a group. It can be an association of unions, it can be an association of different kinds of companies. It's a group in which – say, AFL. It's an association of unions. AFL itself is not an incorporated organization, okay? So third parties can be groups under the legislation, but they can't be prosecuted just because of the way they're organized. The unions themselves fall under the legislation, the individual unions, but the AFL isn't defined in that situation.

Ms Blakeman: Or, say, equally, something like CAPP . . .

Mr. Resler: Exactly.

Ms Blakeman: . . . which, again, is an association. And you are trying to get at the larger associations, the larger umbrella affiliations?

Mr. Resler: Yes.

Ms Blakeman: Okay.

Mr. Resler: So, then, the way of doing that is to add a clause which defines who are the directing minds of the association or the organization, the group itself.

Ms Blakeman: The directing minds?

Mr. Resler: That's how it's defined. You know, who are the directing minds? Is there an executive board? Are there the heads of the unions? What is the group itself? So we're looking at how we can define that group.

Ms Blakeman: Okay. Now, the last one is more of a philosophical question, and I apologize for that. In tribute to my former colleague and former leader of the Alberta Liberals Kevin Taft, he was very much against moving to electronic voting. His concern was that if any party was ever able to get control or get access and be able to control any part of this, we were all doomed because we could never get it back. There's just such an integrated process that happens now with whoever is the governing party in Alberta, that the current governing party has instituted and anyone taking over would likely make use of, that we would never be able to recover. We would never be able to fix it. Have you considered that? I know that you're going to tell me that it's secure and blah, blah, blah. Yup. But we know that most of the transgressions that happen with, for example, personal information under FOIP happen with deliberate human intervention or deliberately deciding to misuse that information.

Mr. Resler: When we look at electronic voting, we're not looking at Internet-based voting. That's not the direction we're going. We're looking at electronic voting in the capacity of being in person. So the elector is in person. It's one person at a time. You're able to confirm that they are the registered elector.

If you're looking at the information that is on the laptops that are being used, nothing is stored on the laptops. It is Internet based, right? So if a laptop went missing, there wouldn't be a list of electors on that laptop.

Ms Blakeman: Don't tell me that it's in the cloud.

Mr. Resler: No.

Ms Blakeman: Okay. Where is it?

Mr. Resler: Our servers are part of the GOA Crawford centre, so the secure servers.

Ms Blakeman: Okay. So your secure servers that hold all the information are under the control of the current government and on their computers?

Mr. Resler: They're on our computers. They're hosted at that location.

Ms Blakeman: Uh-huh. You're going to have to make me feel better about that one, but I'm not going to make you do it at this instant. But you can see where I'm going to have a problem with

this. And this, of course, is absolutely no reflection on my most esteemed colleagues in the room and joining us in the air here. But it is a concern because if you have a group that's as in control of things as we currently have and you've got your information associated with them, how am I supposed to trust that? There's a bigger problem there. Okay. Well, we'll talk about that later, but that's my concern.

I mean, the second part of that is that the more information you're collecting on an individual – and I know why you're doing it. It's so that it's easier to mesh it with all of the other databases that are being collected in the world. It makes me crazy. But the more you collect, the more there is there to be misused if somebody does deliberately get access to it or something goes wrong. I just have a caution about that. I understand why you're doing it. I know there's a long history where we haven't been able to create permanent voters lists because what we collected didn't line up with what the feds collected and didn't line up with what the municipalities collected. We couldn't ever mesh those, and that, I think, is what you're trying to do, which is a good thing.

Mr. Resler: Yes.

Ms Blakeman: But I'm putting forward the caution that the more you collect about somebody, the more there is for somebody else to have about that individual. We'll continue that conversation, too.

Thank you very much.

The Chair: Great. Okay. Thank you.

Mr. Eggen: Thank you for your report. It was very comprehensive and very encouraging, I think, in general, too. I certainly agree with most of your recommendations.

My first question is in regard to your request for supplementary funding for the contingency of an early election. We know that we have in place in this province legislation that sets a fixed election season. By requesting the supplementary funding, it would imply that that legislation is not binding somehow, that it can be overridden by other mechanisms. I guess that's what you're saying, right?

Mr. Resler: Correct. Yes. The government can dissolve at any time prior to that period.

Mr. Eggen: Right. So you are being responsible to recognize that contingency here with this early election request. If the government doesn't call an election in the fall and if you've requested this money and then it happens later, what happens to the funding?

Mr. Resler: The funding is returned into the GRF. We do not expend the funds.

Mr. Eggen: Okay. I know that it's difficult to get returning officers, for example. How would that affect your recruitment capacity if you start recruiting in the fall and then stop recruiting?

Mr. Resler: Well, currently the recruitment process is under way, and it was in our original budget, in our current budget right now, to commence the recruitment. We've already put ads out for that purpose. We were looking originally at April of 2015 to bring them on full-time, so it's bringing it up, you know, six months earlier than originally anticipated.

Mr. Eggen: Right. Okay. Good. Thanks.

My second question is just around the optical scanners. If we were to go in this direction, it still doesn't eliminate the existence

of physical ballots, though, and the whole process around that, does it?

Mr. Resler: No. There will still be a paper trail, in a sense.

Mr. Eggen: For every way by which you can put a ballot through?

Mr. Resler: Yes.

Mr. Eggen: Okay. I really like this vote anywhere concept for the sake of students and so forth. Those ballots: where do they end up? Like, if you're living in Edmonton but you live in Smoky Lake and you want to vote at home, do they still just get stored in the same way? I'm not sure.

Mr. Resler: We haven't totally worked out the logistics. It may be centralized to begin with, but ultimately for the official count itself they are returned to the returning officer for their count. Right? It'll be, you know, consolidated with the individual returning officer and their electoral division.

Mr. Eggen: Right. Okay. I just was following this. It's an interesting thing. In the B.C. election last year you didn't get your official results till later as a result of all of this.

Mr. Resler: Yes. That was a special ballot process, and I believe it was up to a 10-day delay on the count as a result, yeah.

11:20

Mr. Eggen: So it's just something we have to live with. If you have a bunch of close races here and there, though, you wouldn't necessarily be able to form a government within the 10 days.

Mr. Resler: Exactly. That's what we want to avoid. With this process, you'd have it that evening, on election day, so there would be no delay.

Mr. Eggen: Right. Okay. Good.

Then, finally, if there's an early election, we can't do this at all?

Mr. Resler: No.

Mr. Eggen: But we could probably do it if we followed that fixed election season?

Mr. Resler: Yes.

Mr. Eggen: Okay. Thanks a lot.

Mr. Resler: Thank you.

The Chair: Okay. We'll go to Neil, but just quickly before we do, is there anybody else on the phone? I've been told that theoretically we should be done in about 10 minutes with Mr. Resler and the crew, but if there's anybody else on the phone, too, let me know now.

Mr. Khan: Mr. Chair, I'd just like to provide a few comments.

The Chair: Okay. Anybody else?

Mr. Wilson: Yes. Jeff Wilson has a question. Thank you.

The Chair: Okay. We'll go Neil, Steve, Jeff.
Go ahead, Neil.

Dr. Brown: Okay. Thanks. Mr. Resler, you touched on this issue in your response to Ms Blakeman's initial question. Could you

elaborate a little bit more on your proposal for a mail-based enumeration of the electors? Are you intending to start from scratch with a whole new list here? One of the issues that we've constantly dealt with is that people get added to the electors list at a specific address and they never get taken off. Sometimes we have two, three families listed at the same address. It would include previous owners of the residence, previous renters of the residence. While the correct ones may be there, there are a lot that are no longer at that address. I'm just wondering how you're going to go about creating this mail-based enumeration. Are you intending to start from scratch? How are you going to build that list?

[Mr. Young in the chair]

Mr. Resler: You're correct that the list has duplicate information. It has information that includes multiple residents at the same address. We are not going to start with a clean list. We will provide information, name and address, of the electors that we have at that residence. What it is is a complete mail base for every residential address that we have in our database. The enumeration record will be mailed as part of that and request the information to be updated. Whether all electors listed are to be deleted and new ones added or whether it's confirmed, they'll be provided options of doing it online or returning it by mail or else by phone to the call centre.

Dr. Brown: I'm still not very clear on how you're going to clean up the list. Are you asking the present residents to send you something back saying, "Joe Blow doesn't live here any longer"?

[Mr. Jeneroux in the chair]

Mr. Resler: Yes. Yes, we are. The enumeration record, the same record that we would go door to door with, is a preprinted record. We would not include date of birth, gender, citizenship. That information isn't included on this. We have passed this by the Privacy Commissioner already as far as the inclusion of this information. It would go to the residents. We'd have a return envelope in there for them to return the information, and we'd be requesting them to update the data that we have for that address.

Dr. Brown: Will you follow up if they don't return it?

Mr. Resler: Yeah. Obviously, there's a cost involved.

I guess it's a two-step process. We will have some follow-up. The information that we receive back we'll evaluate as far as: what is the per cent of no contact? There are some areas in the past that have been, you know, 35 per cent no contact from the door-to-door enumeration. We will look to see if there is a need for a targeted enumeration for that area. If we have high no contact or high nonresponse, the returning officers will look at that, and there is the possibility of follow-up.

Otherwise, with the where-to-vote cards during the election, that information is going to be targeted, where it's going to be individual to each elector on the where-to-vote card. So it's not one for the household. Every elector listed will have a where-to-vote card that they can bring to the poll, and then the information can be updated through those cards, too. So there are a couple of directions in which we can update the list.

Dr. Brown: Okay. Well, I have some concern with those extra people on there, particularly if you're going to this electronic voting. If somebody is still getting mail addressed to a previous resident, there's always the possibility, you know, that a

delinquent bill or an old utility bill or something could still come to that address and allow them to vote.

I'll leave that with you.

Mr. Resler: Okay. Thank you.

The Chair: Anything else to add? No? Okay.

Thank you, Neil.

We have Steve Khan with some brief comments and then Jeff on the phone.

Mr. Khan: Thank you very much, Mr. Chair. Can you all hear me? Fantastic. I'd like to begin by thanking Mr. Resler for his outstanding presentation and excellent information. I want to thank him for his continued work and the excellent work of his entire office. I'm warning you that there may actually be a question contained within my comments, so we'll see if we can get there.

I do also want to make note of the vote anywhere initiative, that Mr. Resler spoke about. As he speaks very eloquently about the barriers to participating in elections, I want to congratulate him on the initiative. I think it's a very laudable goal, a goal that all parties would support, in any initiative that we can back, that will make it easier for Albertans to vote and participate in elections. Thank you for that work, and you certainly have my strong support in any initiative that makes it easier for Albertans to vote, breaking down those barriers to participating in future elections.

Now, maybe I do have a question in terms of some of the conversation about an early election. I do understand, Mr. Resler, your need to be proactive and consider, you know, every option available. The last thing, I would suggest, you'd want to do is to be caught off guard, so I certainly understand that. Our colleague David Eggen, again, spoke about an early election. I think it should be noted for the record that there is talk about an early election, but as far as I've heard, the only people talking about an early election are our opposition MLAs. I personally have not heard anybody from government suggesting or even speculating about an early election.

I guess my question would be: Mr. Resler, have you been approached by government or told by government that there is going to be an early election? [interjections]

The Chair: Okay. We'll move on, Steve, if that's okay.

Mr. Resler: I'd just like to comment quickly.

The Chair: Sure. Go ahead.

Mr. Resler: As far as my supplementary funding request, it is being proactive. I have to be prepared should it be called. Under no circumstance do I know what we're moving into. Really, I'm looking at the next election being in 2016. Should it change, I need to be prepared. I need to be able to perform some functions that take a longer lead time. If an election was called, to be able to stock a warehouse, be able to engage returning officers, there's a huge amount of work that's required. You know, although I am putting this forward, I still have opportunity in which I would not follow through in the process later in the fall. It's just a preparation thing.

Thank you.

11:30

The Chair: Wonderful.

Mr. Khan: Mr. Resler, thank you for your answers, and again thank you for your work. Much appreciated.

The Chair: And thank you, MLA Khan.

Moving on to Jeff Wilson, please. Thank you.

Mr. Wilson: Well, thank you, Mr. Chair, and thank you, committee members, and Mr. Resler, for your presentation. I can't resist a comment on Mr. Khan's comments around the early election. Now, all three PC leadership candidates have promised – and I'm using air quotes; you guys can't see me, but I'm doing it – a 2016 election. We can all rest assured that we never see broken promises from anyone in this government, so we can take that to the bank.

Mr. Resler, we all know that decreasing voter turnout is a serious problem in Alberta and across the country, so I want to thank you for these exciting initiatives with a serious intent of correcting that trend. Obviously, there are, as many of my colleagues have already expressed, some concerns around the electronic voting. I just want to get a sense from you: do you believe that moving to this process of electronic voting will increase your ability to minimize voter fraud?

Mr. Resler: The elector is coming in person in this situation. Currently the elector does not have to provide identification if they're already on the list of electors. If that's something that you feel is a concern, I think that's something that can be brought up during the general, comprehensive review of the legislation. Other electoral jurisdictions do require it. If the person is to be registered in person, identification is provided. It's no different than a special ballot. Is there opportunity? There could be. We try to minimize it as much as possible, but we are a trusting society, too. So we can tighten up the legislation if there's a concern.

Mr. Wilson: Great. Thank you.

Moving on to one of the points you brought up around signage around polling stations, I guess, just quickly: considering that these violations would happen on election day, what are the penalties that your office has at its disposal for a violation of this rule?

Mr. Resler: I believe that it's a general offence under the legislation. If you want to give us a moment, we'll just look it up quickly. If they're guilty of an offence, they're liable to a fine of not more than \$500.

Mr. Wilson: That's a pretty reasonable expense to break that rule. Is that something that you can suggest that we address in legislation as well?

Mr. Resler: I think anything is up for review if the member wishes. So absolutely.

Mr. Wilson: Okay. Very good.

While I've got you here, just a really, again, quick question on third-party advertising. We recently saw obscene amounts of money being spent in Ontario. I'm just looking for your professional opinion and the clarification on the differences between legislation in Ontario and Alberta around the rules governing third-party advertising and on what it was that you are asking for, that you had brought up in your comments earlier.

Mr. Resler: I'm not directly familiar with Ontario's rules. We can provide that information, a comparison, for you. In Alberta there is no limit on the amount of money that can be spent. What it is is transparency as far as disclosure, as far as who the third party is.

The contributions over \$250 themselves are disclosed and made public, so they're the same rules as a contribution to any political entity other than there is no limit. I can follow up with you as far as a document comparing Ontario and Alberta. I don't have that information right now.

Mr. Wilson: I would appreciate that, and there's no rush on that. That is all for me, Chairman. Thank you.

The Chair: Good. Thank you, Jeff.

Yes, if you don't mind following up with the committee, it would be good to have that.

If everybody's okay, we'll move on; we'll let Mr. Resler go.

Ms Blakeman: Sorry. One final.

The Chair: Oh, okay. Ms Blakeman, one final.

Ms Blakeman: Sorry. Listening to the last couple of questions, one of the areas that has been contentious and where, if we were going to find it, voter fraud was most likely to be found was special ballots. Now, a number of the things that you are suggesting would reduce the number of special ballots, correct?

Mr. Resler: Correct.

Ms Blakeman: So that would in fact be reducing the number of opportunities in that case. Okay.

Mr. Resler: For the special-ballot process one thing that has changed for anyone requesting a special ballot is that they have to provide identification. So, you know, part of it is an attestation. They are attaching photocopies of their identification. If it's a current elector, that information is matched to the elector that's on the list. If it's a new registration, then the information is provided to us.

Ms Blakeman: I'd just rather not have them. Okay.

Mr. Resler: Yeah.

Ms Blakeman: Good. Thank you.

The Chair: Okay. Well, then, thank you.

Ms DeLong: Hi. I have a question.

The Chair: Really quickly if you could, Alana. Thanks.

Ms DeLong: Yes. Mail-out enumeration, all these costs here: isn't this a less expensive way also of doing it?

Mr. Resler: Definitely. The cost for the last door-to-door enumeration, in 2011, was \$6.5 million. To perform one in 2015, obviously, would be higher. The mail-based enumeration cost is approximately \$2 million. Unfortunately, the cost of mail has increased, so that's the price that we're looking at.

Ms DeLong: Okay. Good. Thank you very much.

The Chair: Okay. Thank you, Alana.

Then on behalf of the committee thank you, Mr. Resler and your staff, for attending today. The committee will be making its decisions shortly, and these will be transmitted to you within the next few days.

Mr. Resler: Super. Thank you very much.

The Chair: Okay. As Mr. Resler and the crew pack up, are you guys okay with dealing with the supplementary funding requests first, and then we'll go into the rest of the work here?

In that case, Rachel is just handing out all of the motion wording. Do we have that for those on the phone? Okay. You all on the phone have them e-mailed as well.

Ms Blakeman: I'm wondering if the plan is to follow what Mr. Resler gave us in the breakdown, which would be a vote on the use of vote tabulators, a vote on the use of electronic real-time poll books, a vote on advance polls using the vote anywhere, a vote on supplementary funding, and a vote on the legislative amendments.

The Chair: Yeah. You bet.

Ms Blakeman: Okay.

The Chair: We'll do the supplementary funding of the office of the Child and Youth Advocate, then we'll move on to the supplementary funding of the Chief Electoral Officer, and then we'll go ahead and do the other pieces that the Chief Electoral Officer asked for.

Ms Blakeman: I don't think we're going to get through that.

The Chair: I know.

Dr. Brown: No.

The Chair: Okay. A no.

Ms Blakeman: Well, I think that it involves more . . .

The Chair: Let's do the supplementary funding, if you're okay with it, on the Child and Youth Advocate first, and then we'll talk about the electoral officer. We might have some comments from Rob Reynolds on the whole process, that we just talked about here, with the Chief Electoral Officer.

Everybody has a copy of the motion for the Child and Youth Advocate? Okay. Would a member make a motion, then, with respect to the 2014-15 supplementary funding request from the office of the Child and Youth Advocate, please?

Mr. Young: I move that

the Standing Committee on Legislative Offices approve the request by the office of the Child and Youth Advocate for supplemental funding for the 2014-2015 fiscal year in the amount of \$730,000, to cover costs of expanded investigative responsibilities related to child death reviews and that the chair on behalf of the committee forward the request to the President of Treasury Board and Minister of Finance.

The Chair: All right. Any discussion on the motion? On the phone? No.

I'll call the question. All those in favour of the motion? Any opposed? The motion is carried.

11:40

Ms DeLong: I'd like to move that

the Standing Committee on Legislative Offices approve the request by the office of the Chief Electoral Officer for supplemental funding for the 2014-2015 fiscal year in the amount of \$2,110,000 to cover costs related to the purchase of inventory, retention of returning officers, and mailing of a province-wide enumeration and that the chair on behalf of the committee forward the request to the President of Treasury Board and Minister of Finance.

The Chair: Wonderful. Thank you for being proactive there, Alana.

Any discussion on the motion?

I'll call the question. All those in favour of the motion? Any opposed? The motion is carried.

Okay. All right. Now the committee must consider the request from the Chief Electoral Officer to introduce a new process and equipment in advance polls. For members' information, this is the first request of its nature to be considered by the Legislative Offices Committee, and Mr. Rob Reynolds is here in attendance to assist the committee in this respect.

Mr. Reynolds, anything to add?

Mr. Reynolds: Well, thank you, Mr. Chair. Just to go back over what the Chief Electoral Officer said and just to clarify, the first issue that the committee would be considering would be to adapt certain changes, as it says, "Vote tabulators and voter assist terminals at the next by-election." This proposal doesn't require a legislative change. It's just pursuant to section 4.1 of the Election Act, which came into force in 2010. If I may just quickly skim over this for the committee:

- (1) Where the Chief Electoral Officer wishes to test at a by-election the use of election procedures and equipment that are different from what this Act requires, the Chief Electoral Officer shall submit a written proposal to the Standing Committee describing in detail the election procedures and equipment proposed to be tested.
- (2) If the Standing Committee approves the proposal, with or without changes, the Chief Electoral Officer may test the use of the election procedures and equipment in accordance with the approved proposal.

That's what he's requesting, to use those at a by-election.

The Chair: Question, Laurie?

Ms Blakeman: Okay. Thank you for that clarification because I would have had that wrong. Passing this first possibility that you've outlined really just approves what he's put in front of us and gives him permission to go ahead and do it at a by-election only, and if there's no by-election between now and the next general election, it doesn't get tested. In order to approve its being used in an advance poll, we then have to approve the recommended amendment that's come forward in the package of amendments that he's proposed. Am I correct?

Mr. Reynolds: As I understand, yes, you are correct.

Ms Blakeman: Good. Excellent. Thank you.

Mr. Reynolds: It's not a double-edged sword. It's a double proposal in the sense that the Chief Electoral Officer is proposing to test a few things at the by-election, but he's also proposing amendments to the section that allows him to do this so that he won't just have to do this at a by-election again in the event that there isn't a by-election before a general election, if that makes any sense and if I haven't confused this for you.

The Chair: That's what we deal with in our second piece.

Mr. Reynolds: Yes. Part of that would be the second piece. They are related, but the first is separate from the second.

The Chair: Just concerning the by-election. Okay.

Mr. Young: I may be jumping ahead to the second part, but this . . .

The Chair: Then don't.

Mr. Young: Okay. Yeah, I won't. I'll wait till later.

The Chair: All right. That was easy.

Anybody on the phone have any comments before we speak to just the first motion here before us?

No. Okay. We have a mover. Steve Young, go ahead.

Mr. Young: I move that

in accordance with Section 4.1 of the Election Act, the Standing Committee on Legislative Offices approve the proposal by the Chief Electoral Officer to introduce the use of vote tabulators and voter assist terminals at the next by-election.

The Chair: Okay. Any discussion on the motion?

I'll call the question. All those in favour of the motion? Any opposed? I think that's everybody, so the motion is carried.

Ms Blakeman: I'll read the next one.

The Chair: Okay. Bear with me for just a second. I'll read into the record here. The final issue brought forward by the Chief Electoral Officer was the proposed legislative amendments. I'd like to note that the officers may bring forward proposed statute amendments for the committee's consideration. However, the committee does not have the mandate to approve amendments but may forward its recommendations to, in this case, the Minister of Justice and Solicitor General.

We have the question before us if we as members are prepared to address the proposed legislative changes, or would the committee wish to have more time to consider the amendments before voting? You all know that I anticipate a meeting in the not-too-distant future to deal with the salary matters. The amendments can be made then. That's kind of what's before us here. If someone wants to make the motion, we can do that, or would somebody like to make a change as well?

Dr. Brown: Mr. Chairman, I think that we need to deliberate a little bit on some of these proposals, and I would like to have some more time to hear what various members of the committee have to say about it before we vote on it.

The Chair: All right. Thanks, Neil.

Laurie, you had comments?

Ms Blakeman: Well, I was prepared to go ahead and move the motion to transmit the amendments on the Election Act as proposed through to the Minister of Justice and Solicitor General. If there is not a level of comfort with that, I'm happy to wait and have it discussed another time, but I am very prepared to move the motion now.

The Chair: Okay.

Steve, you have some comments?

Mr. Young: Maybe it's more of a question, but what is the timeliness of this? If we do it now, is this going to be something that isn't actually up for consideration by the Justice minister for some period of time? Are we afforded the time that my hon. colleague Neil Brown has asked for, or is this a timely issue?

The Chair: Rob, comments?

Mr. Reynolds: Well, I'm sure that it's a timely issue, but I think that as the chair indicated, there's probably a good likelihood that the committee would be asked to reconvene in the relatively near

future to discuss, amongst other things, salary matters for the officers. I believe that what the chair was saying was that at that time it may be possible to discuss the proposed amendments by the Chief Electoral Officer. I don't know about the timing, but I imagine that would be in the next . . .

The Chair: September?

Mr. Reynolds: Early September.

Mr. Young: Mr. Chair, given that, I think that there's general support, but let's just for the comfort of some if not all go through this in more detail and consider it even if there isn't any debate in that forthcoming meeting. I think we should use the time to wrap our heads around all the details that have been proposed before us, with really no cost in terms of time.

The Chair: Okay.

Any comments on the phone?

Mr. Wilson: Well, I would concur with Mr. Young's comments. I believe that it would be prudent for us to have the opportunity to perhaps take this back to our various caucuses and just discuss it before we bring it back to the committee for a vote.

The Chair: Thanks, Jeff.

Mrs. Leskiw: For clarification, it says: to introduce in the Assembly. If we say yes here, it goes to the Minister of Justice. The Minister of Justice would not present it on the floor of the Legislature until we – like, would it have to go back to the Legislative Assembly?

11:50

Mr. Reynolds: If I may, Mr. Chair?

The Chair: Yes.

Mr. Reynolds: Yes, it would because you'd be proposing amendments to the legislation, which would have to go before the Assembly.

Mrs. Leskiw: That would not occur until we're back in the House, the end of October. So we have a time element here of almost three months before the Leg. sits again.

Mr. Reynolds: Well, the Legislature is projected to come back on October 27. Sometimes legislation takes a little longer than that, as you know, to be drafted and to go through the stages. So I couldn't really say how long it would take.

Mrs. Leskiw: The reason I'm questioning this is because at that time the entire Legislature will be discussing these amendments. Is that not correct? So whether we discuss them as a committee, they're going to be rediscussed on the floor of the Legislature. Is that not correct?

Mr. Reynolds: Yes, the Assembly would have to consider the amendments, definitely.

Mrs. Leskiw: So there really is no harm in sending it from here to the Minister of Justice to draft an amendment to the Legislature because everyone in the House is going to have an opportunity to discuss these and vote on these amendments in the House, right?

Mr. Reynolds: Well, I will go along with that, that the Assembly will be able to consider, obviously, the amendments. As to

whether there's any harm or not, I imagine that's the decision of the committee.

Mrs. Leskiw: But everyone is going to have the ability to discuss them.

Mr. Reynolds: Yes. It'll be in the Assembly if they go ahead.

Mr. Wilson: Mr. Chair, if I could.

The Chair: Sure. We have Steve Young, and then, Jeff, you're next.

Mr. Young: Just going off what Genia was saying, I think this committee does need to do our due diligence even in the context of the fact that there are subsequent stages: consideration by the minister, what the minister decides to bring forward, and then there will be a discussion. I still think we need to – as a committee we're closer to this, and we've actually had the benefit of having the electoral officer before us and being able to debate it amongst ourselves. I'd rather have a tight product that we can all stand behind that we forward to the Minister of Justice. Even if at the end of the day the Legislature does decide, I think that we need to do our stewards' work on this issue.

The Chair: Okay. Good point.
Jeff.

Mr. Wilson: Thank you. Clarification, if I may, Mr. Reynolds. If we were to forward all of these amendments to the Minister of Justice, he still has the authority to be selective in what is actually written into amending legislation and debated in the Legislature. Is that correct?

Mr. Reynolds: Well, if the committee approved the amendments that would go along to the Minister of Justice, what would be introduced in the Assembly – I don't know. I mean, it may or may not be what Mr. Resler presented here, for a number of reasons. I can't say what the final product would look like.

Mr. Wilson: Thank you.

The Chair: Okay. I guess I'm hearing still a lot of support for perhaps deferring this to our next meeting, which, again, is hopefully happening sooner than later. Do we need a motion to that effect, or is it that we just put it on the agenda? A motion to defer? Would anybody be prepared to make a motion to defer?

David Eggen.

Mr. Eggen: Yeah. I would suggest that
we defer these recommendations to the next meeting of this committee,

The Chair: Okay. Any discussion on the motion?

All right. I'll call the question. All those in favour of the motion? Any opposed to the motion? Laurie Blakeman opposed. The motion is still carried.

Okay. Great. We have five minutes to do the next two items. We can do it, I'm being told.

The chair and the deputy chair attended a meeting on June 26 with the Auditor General and senior staff of his office as well as the audit team from St. Arnaud Pinsent Steman, the firm under contract to conduct the annual audit of the office of the Auditor General. For the committee's information, the 2013-14 audit was completed without any issues identified, and the final report of the auditor will be posted on the internal committee website.

We also had the opportunity to ask him if the firm of St. Arnaud Pinsent Steman wished to continue their contract as auditor of the office of the Auditor General. They are now completing their final year of an initial five-year contract with the committee. For members' information, it has been the past practice of this committee to renew an audit contract for an additional five-year period. I'll open the floor to discussion and note that Rob and Karen are also here to respond to questions. Any questions?

Dr. Brown: I guess the question I'd have is: if this firm has been engaged for five years – it's generally considered good corporate practice to change auditors every five years or so, and I just wonder what the rationale was for such a lengthy engagement of the same auditors. I mean, in the corporate world the theory is that auditors can become a little bit too cozy with the client.

The Chair: Okay. Go, Karen.

Mrs. Sawchuk: Mr. Chair, thank you. This committee has reviewed the contract for the office of the Auditor General in the past, and the one thing is that auditing the Auditor General's operations is considered kind of involved, and it takes a bit of time for the auditors to get on board with everything. The other side of the coin is that the auditors who accept this contract are then restricted from engaging in any other contract with the office of the Auditor General, which does contract out quite a bit of work, so it's kind of restrictive. In the past we did do an RFP, and we only had two possible companies come forward at the time. It's kind of a limited pool, and the auditors in place prior to this were on record for 12 years total.

Dr. Brown: Well, I'm going to go on the record as saying that 10 years is far too long to have the same auditing firm engaged. I'm going to propose an amendment to the proposal for the five-year extension, and I'm going to say two years. I'm going to move that the Standing Committee on Legislative Offices approve the reappointment of St. Arnaud Pinsent Steman, chartered accountants, as the auditor of the office of the Auditor General, for a further two-year term commencing with the 2014-15 audit and that the chair be authorized to enter into a letter of engagement on behalf of the committee.

The Chair: Okay. All right. We have that motion before us. Any discussion on that motion?

Okay. I'm going to call the question. All those in favour of the amended motion for the two-year term? Any opposed? Ms Blakeman. The motion is carried.

All right. Last on the agenda, the 2014 COGEL conference is being held in Pittsburgh. This association comprises members of ethics, lobbying, elections, and information and privacy offices as well as the oversight organizations. The committee budget covers the attendance of the chair, two committee members, and the committee clerk. As well, three members will be identified as alternates should someone be unable to attend. If necessary we'll conduct draws for delegates and alternates. Would those members interested in attending this conference please identify themselves? We'll do a draw if necessary. The committee clerk has already recorded the requests of Dr. Brown, Ms Blakeman, Mr. McDonald to be included in the draw.

Genia. Steve. Would anybody else on the phone like to be included in the draw?

Mr. Wilson: Please add Jeff Wilson to the draw.

The Chair: Jeff. David Eggen.

Mr. Eggen: Pittsburgh in December. Can't beat that.

12:00

The Chair: Okay. All right, then. We will do the draw. Our Chief Electoral Officer would be pleased.

Dr. Brown: Mr. Chairman, before you do the draw, I had an opportunity to attend this in the past, and I think I would withdraw my name because there are a number of other people that haven't had the opportunity. It's a very worthwhile conference, and I would certainly recommend the experience. So if you want to take my name out.

The Chair: Okay. We'll take you out now. Thank you.

So the first two names that we draw will be designated as attendees, and the next three names drawn will be designated as alternates.

The first attendee: David Eggen. You'll get to see Pittsburgh. And Genia Leskiw. Okay. So those are the two attendees.

The next three will be alternates. Steve Young, you're the first alternate; Jeff Wilson, the second alternate; Laurie Blakeman, the third alternate.

All right. So we have a motion. Everybody has a copy of the motion there? Would somebody like to make the motion?

Mr. Young: I'll do it. I move that

the Standing Committee on Legislative Offices approve the chair, Dave Eggen, and Genia Leskiw and the alternates, being myself, Jeff Wilson, and Laurie Blakeman, for the Council on Government Ethics Laws, COGEL, conference in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, from December 7 to 10, 2014.

The Chair: You just missed the committee clerk in there, too, so I imagine you want to add that. Right?

Mr. Young: Yeah. I would like to amend my motion to include the committee clerk as an attendee.

The Chair: Okay. All in favour? Any objections? Carried.

Then just a note on this. The 2013 COGEL report was posted on the committee website for information purposes and will be included in the Legislative Assembly Office annual report for 2013-14. Ms Blakeman, Dr. Brown, and Mr. McDonald were

delegates to the 2013 conference. Do any of you, which is, I guess, just Dr. Brown and Ms Blakeman, have anything to add to that report verbally?

Dr. Brown: Well, there's lots to report, but I hesitate to try and do it. I've got notes, but I don't want to take up too much time. I would say that there's a lot of progressive legislation happening. One of them is followthemoney.org, which I found pretty intriguing. This talked a lot about the legislation and a 50-state database. If anybody is interested, I recommend they go to that website. It's called followthemoney.org. They have a 50-state database in there, and they have all kinds of stuff, including the disclosure of lobbying expenditures, which we don't have now. So there are some things that we might consider in the future, I think, in terms of enhancing our Lobbyists Act. There's a lot of good stuff there about electronically filing and so on. I'd just recommend that. I'll add that.

The Chair: Great. If you want to submit your notes to Karen Sawchuk, feel free.

Dr. Brown: Sure.

The Chair: All right. So if there's no other business, I'd like to advise the committee that the salary review for the officers of the Legislature will be considered at a future meeting, once the necessary salary information related to management, opted-out, and excluded employees, including senior officials, has been received.

The date of the next meeting: members will be polled, looking at, hopefully, early September.

If nobody has anything else to add, that's our meeting. We just need a motion to adjourn.

Mr. Wilson: So moved.

The Chair: Okay. Jeff Wilson moved to adjourn. Sorry, Steve; you got scooped.

All right. Thank you, everybody.

[The committee adjourned at 12:05 p.m.]

