



Standing Committee on
Procedure and Privileges

Report on the Review of the Chief Electoral Officer's Report on the Administration of the 2023 Territorial General Election

20th Northwest Territories Legislative Assembly

Chair: Ms. Kate Reid

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PROCEDURE AND PRIVILEGES**

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SPEAKER OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

Mr. Speaker:

Your Standing Committee on Procedure and Privileges is pleased to provide its *Report on the Chief Electoral Officer's Report on the Administration of the 2023 Territorial General Election* and commends it to the House.



Kate Reid

Chair, Standing Committee on Procedures and Privileges

**STANDING COMMITTEE ON
PROCEDURE AND PRIVILEGES**

**REPORT ON THE CHIEF ELECTORAL OFFICER'S REPORT
ON THE ADMINISTRATION OF THE 2023 TERRITORIAL
GENERAL ELECTION**

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STANDING COMMITTEE ON PROCEDURE AND PRIVILEGES

REPORT ON THE CHIEF ELECTORAL OFFICER'S REPORT ON THE ADMINISTRATION OF THE 2023 TERRITORIAL GENERAL ELECTION

INTRODUCTION

In accordance with subsection 266(2) of the *Elections and Plebiscites Act*, the Chief Electoral Officer (CEO) is required to submit a report on the administration of election-related activities within six months following a Territorial General Election. This report includes any issues the CEO deems important for the Legislative Assembly and offers recommendations for enhancing election administration, as well as suggestions for potential amendments to the Act.

The Speaker tabled the CEO's report on May 21, 2024, in the Legislative Assembly and was subsequently referred to the Standing Committee on Procedure and Privileges (Committee) for review and response to the recommendations.

From September 2, 2024, to September 27, 2024, Committee invited public input on the CEO's report, receiving two written submissions. On September 27, 2024, the Committee held a public briefing with CEO Mr. Stephen Dunbar and Deputy Chief Electoral Officer Ms. Charlotte Digness. During this session, Mr. Aleksi Toiviainen from Vote16 Canada also provided testimony, focusing on the CEO's recommendation to lower the voting age in the Northwest Territories to 16.

Committee made two recommendations in Committee Report 18-20(1): Interim Report on the Report of the Chief Electoral Officer on the Administration of the 2023 Territorial General Election (the Report) recommending a repeal and replacement of the *Elections and Plebiscites Act* before the end of the 20th Assembly, and that the CEO engage with the Northwest Territories Association of Communities to determine how to better support local authority election activities.

In the Report, Committee noted that they would continue their investigation into the recommendation of the CEO to lower the voting age to 16 and will provide a separate report in the 2025 Winter sitting of the Legislative Assembly on their findings and the response to this recommendation.

LOWERING THE VOTING AGE TO 16

Committee has undertaken further work on the CEO's recommendation to lower the voting age to 16 and has not reached consensus on the recommendation.

Committee's work has highlighted that there may be a number of viable solutions to improving low voter turnout in the Northwest Territories. As such, Committee feels that the CEO's recommendation should be considered as part of a larger conversation about broader engagement and empowerment of the electorate. Committee believes that this issue warrants further study and should be accompanied by an appropriately expanded mandate for Committee to consider the full scope of potential options, including recommending policy and legislative options.

<p>Recommendation 1: The Standing Committee on Procedures and Privileges recommends that the Speaker refer the broader matter of low voter turnout in the Northwest Territories to the Standing Committee on Procedures and Privileges to be studied and reported on.</p>
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CONCLUSION

Committee wishes to thank the members of the public who provided written submissions and the witnesses who participated in Committee's public hearing in September 2024.

Committee would like to once again express its gratitude to Elections NWT for their hard work, commitment, and support, not only to the election candidates but also to the residents of the Northwest Territories.