

Standing Committee on
Procedure and Privileges



Report on the Review of Motion 56-20(1): Code of Conduct Referral to the Standing Committee on Procedure and Privileges.

20th Northwest Territories Legislative Assembly

Chair: Ms. Kate Reid

**MEMBERS OF THE STANDING COMMITTEE ON
PROCEDURE AND PRIVILEGES**

Kate Reid
MLA Great Slave
Chair

Hon. Vince McKay
MLA Hay River South
Deputy Chair

Julian Morse
MLA Frame Lake

Denny Rodgers
MLA Inuvik Boot Lake

Kieron Testart
MLA Range Lake

Alternates

Shauna Morgan
MLA Yellowknife North

Hon. Lesa Semmler
MLA Inuvik Twin Lakes

SPEAKER OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

Mr. Speaker:

Your Standing Committee on Procedure and Privileges is pleased to provide its Report on the Review of Motion 56-20(1): Code of Conduct Referral to the Standing Committee on Procedure and Privileges.



Kate Reid

Chair, Standing Committee on Procedure and Privileges

**STANDING COMMITTEE ON
PROCEDURE AND PRIVILEGES**

**REPORT ON THE REVIEW OF MOTION 56-20(1): CODE OF
CONDUCT REFERRAL TO THE STANDING COMMITTEE ON
PROCEDURE AND PRIVILEGES**

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**STANDING COMMITTEE ON
PROCEDURE AND PRIVILEGES**

**REPORT ON THE REVIEW OF MOTION 56-20(1): CODE OF
CONDUCT REFERRAL TO THE STANDING COMMITTEE ON
PROCEDURE AND PRIVILEGES**

INTRODUCTION

The Standing Committee on Procedure and Privileges (Committee) is pleased to Report on the Review of Motion 56-20(1): Code of Conduct Referral to the Standing Committee on Procedure and Privileges.

On May 27, 2025, Motion 56-20(1) (“the Motion”) was carried in the House and referred to Committee for further review. The Motion, moved by the Member for Great Slave and seconded by the Member for Yellowknife South, was introduced to raise concerns regarding the potential impacts of Members’ online and social media activities on the credibility and institutional integrity of the Legislative Assembly.

The Motion highlights concerns about how online statements may affect public trust. Even when a Member’s post complies with legal and procedural requirements, it can still influence how the public views the Legislative Assembly, all Members, and affect confidence in government processes. The Motion emphasizes the value of respectful communication and the importance of maintaining professional standards in public roles.

The Motion is attached to this report as Appendix A.

Committee has considered these matters and is prepared to provide a report to this House.

Background

Within the Legislative Assembly, freedom of speech is a core privilege. Members have the right to speak freely during official Assembly business, including in Committee meetings. This is a key part of their role. The Assembly’s rules currently

only govern what Members say during those formal proceedings. These rules do not apply to what Members say outside of those settings, including online settings.

Additionally, the Code of Conduct, which is legally binding under section 75 of the *Legislative Assembly and Executive Council Act*, sets expectations for the behaviour of all Members. The Code of Conduct exists to ensure Members act in ways that build public trust, both inside and outside the Assembly. What one Member says or does can affect how the public views other Members and the Assembly as a whole.

The Guide to the Rules Relating to the Conduct of Members notes that “Members are expected to hold themselves to a high standard of conduct.” This reflects the public trust placed in elected officials and applies to both public and private behaviour. However, the Code does not define what constitutes a “high standard,” nor does it provide specific limits or examples.

The Code of Conduct affirms that it does not restrict the Assembly’s authority to regulate its internal affairs. This means that any restriction on Member conduct, whether inside or outside of proceedings, depends on collective decision making by all Members. Members must be willing to define and adopt reasonable boundaries on individual privilege to safeguard the institution’s credibility.

Considerations

Committee discussion and deliberations related to this matter were guided by a deep respect for the importance of parliamentary privilege, the Guiding Principles of Consensus Government in the Northwest Territories, the principles of the Member’s Code of Conduct, the Rules of the Northwest Territories Legislative Assembly, as well as the individual experiences, expectations and views of Committee Members.

Open and respectful communication between Members is a key guiding principle of Consensus Government in the Northwest Territories, as is the ability and willingness of all Members of the Legislative Assembly to work together, within their respective roles, for the collective good of the people of the Northwest Territories. Together these principles can help build the foundation for a legislature that is seen as a safe and respectable workplace and space for all Members, staff and visitors, and can help build public confidence and trust in the Legislative Assembly, all Members, and government processes.

Committee recognizes the need for respectful communication among members, both during proceedings of the Assembly and in other settings. However, Committee does not believe that the Code of Conduct is the appropriate mechanism to address these concerns. This applies whether the concerns relate specifically to online comments, as outlined in the Motion, or to broader forms of communication. Committee believes that leaving the Code of Conduct open to the interpretation of the Integrity Commissioner is both appropriate and desirable. To that end, Committee makes the following recommendation:

Recommendation 1:

The Standing Committee on Procedure and Privileges recommends that the Office of the Clerk develop a document outlining principles for public statements by all Members of the Legislative Assembly, whether made online, in traditional media, or spoken outside of proceedings of the Assembly, and that this document be reviewed by all Members of Caucus. Further, if adopted by Caucus, the document should be made publicly available in a manner directed by Caucus.

This concludes the Committee's report on its Review of Motion 56-20(1): Code of Conduct Referral to the Standing Committee on Procedure and Privileges.

APPENDIX A

- Motion 56-20(1): Code of Conduct Referral to the Standing Committee on Procedure and Privileges

**Code of Conduct Referral to the
Standing Committee on Procedure and Privileges**

WHEREAS a Member's privilege of freedom of speech is crucial to a Member fulfilling their role in the Assembly;

AND WHEREAS a Member's freedom of speech applies to all proceedings of the Assembly, including Committee meetings;

AND WHEREAS a Member's freedom of speech during proceedings is only limited by the Rules of the Legislative Assembly;

AND WHEREAS these rules only apply to proceedings of the House and its Committees;

AND WHEREAS the Member's Code of Conduct was established to ensure that Members conduct themselves in a way that instills trust and confidence on the part of the public in their elected officials;

AND WHEREAS the conduct of individual Members of this Legislative Assembly can and does reflect on all other Members, as well as the institution itself;

AND WHEREAS residents of the Northwest Territories expect, and will hold Members of this Legislative Assembly to a higher standard when it comes to how we conduct our business in and outside of this Assembly;

AND WHEREAS public statements made online by Members of this Legislative Assembly outside of proceedings, that are not governed by our rules, and may not meet the threshold for legal action, may be interpreted by members of the public in a manner that erodes the trust and confidence in the Legislative Assembly and its Members;

NOW THEREFORE I MOVE, seconded by the Member for Yellowknife South, that this Legislative Assembly direct the Standing Committee on Procedure and Privileges to consider if the Northwest Territories Legislative Assembly Member's Code of Conduct requires any amendments or updates regarding statements made online by Members of the Legislative Assembly outside of our proceedings;

AND FURTHER, that the Standing Committee on Procedure and Privileges deliver a report to this House on the matter by February 2026.

Date of Notice: May 23, 2025

Date de l'avis : 23 mai 2025

Date of Introduction: May 27, 2025

Date de présentation : 27 mai 2025

Disposition: CARRIED RV
Disposition : ADOPTÉE VN

Carried: May 27, 2025

Adoptée : 27 mai 2025

Moved by: Ms. Reid

Proposée par : M^{me}. Reid

Seconded by: Ms. Wawzonek

Appuyée par : M^{me}. Wawzonek

Ruled Out of Order:

Déclarée irrecevable :