

Third Session - Thirty-Ninth Legislature
of the
Legislative Assembly of Manitoba
Standing Committee
on
Social and Economic Development

Chairperson
Mr. Daryl Reid
Constituency of Transcona

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MANITOBA LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
Thirty-Ninth Legislature

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA
THE STANDING COMMITTEE ON SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Monday, September 21, 2009

TIME – 6 p.m.

LOCATION – Winnipeg, Manitoba

CHAIRPERSON – Mr. Daryl Reid (Transcona)

VICE-CHAIRPERSON – Ms. Bonnie Korzeniowski (St. James)

ATTENDANCE – 11 QUORUM – 6

Members of the Committee present:

Hon. Ms. Irvin-Ross, Hon. Mr. Lemieux, Hon. Ms. Wowchuk

Ms. Blady, Messrs. Briese, Caldwell, Derkach, Ms. Korzeniowski, Mrs. Mitchelson, Mr. Reid, Mrs. Rowat.

APPEARING:

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux, MLA for Inkster

WITNESSES:

Bill 9–The Social Work Profession Act

Ms. Liz Carlson, Private Citizen

Mr. Bert Crocker, Private Citizen

Mr. Harvy Frankel, Faculty of Social Work, University of Manitoba

Ms. Leona Schroeder, Manitoba Association of Social Workers

Mr. Tom Simms, Private Citizen

Mr. Michael Hart, Aboriginal Social Workers' Society in Manitoba

Ms. Karyn Delichte, Private Citizen

Ms. Sherrill Hershberg, Private Citizen

Mr. Chris Enns, Private Citizen

Mr. David Alper, Private Citizen

Ms. Darlene MacDonald, Canadian Association of Social Workers

Ms. Joy Eidse, Private Citizen

Ms. Diane Roussin, Ma Mawi Wi Chi Itata Centre

Ms. Glenda Peebles, MASW/MIRSW Aboriginal Interest Group

Ms. Jill Brody, Private Citizen

Mr. Donald Burke, Booth College

Mr. Oleksandr Kondrashov, Private Citizen

Mr. Greg McVicker, Private Citizen

Ms. Elsie Flette, First Nations of Southern Manitoba Child and Family Services Authority

Ms. Neta Friesen, Private Citizen

Mr. John Chudzik, Private Citizen

Ms. Shauna MacKinnon, Private Citizen

Bill 4–The Community Revitalization Tax Increment Financing Act

Mr. Stefano Grande, Downtown BIZ

Ms. Loretta Martin, CentreVenture Development Corporation

Mr. Bruce Alexander, Manitoba School Boards Association

Mr. Lorne Weiss, Manitoba Real Estate Association

Mr. Peter Squire, Winnipeg Realtors

WRITTEN SUBMISSIONS:

Bill 4–The Community Revitalization Tax Increment Financing Act

Doug Dobrowolski, Association of Manitoba Municipalities

Bill 9–The Social Work Profession Act

Bonnie Bryant, Private Citizen

Laura Crookshanks, Western Manitoba Liaison Group, MASW/MIRSW

Neta Friesen, Private Citizen

Heather Kirkham, On behalf of the social workers who are community mental health workers in the Assiniboine Regional Health Authority

Keith Mander, Private Citizen

Veronica Marsman, Canadian Association of Social Workers

Marie McKie, Social Work Health Interest Group

Leona Schroeder, Private Citizen

Vicki Verge, Manitoba Children's Issues and Interest Group

Erika Wiebe, Private Citizen

Shauna MacKinnon, Private Citizen

MATTERS UNDER CONSIDERATION:

Bill 4–The Community Revitalization Tax Increment Financing Act

Bill 9–The Social Work Profession Act

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Mr. Chairperson: Good evening, everyone. Will the Standing Committee on Social and Economic Development please come to order.

This meeting has been called to consider Bill 4, The Community Revitalization Tax Increment Financing Act, and Bill 9, The Social Work Profession Act.

We have a number of presenters registered to speak this evening, as noted on the presenters' list at the entrance to this room, but we have three additions to that list for information of committee members. We have Olexsandr Kondrushov, private citizen—

An Honourable Member: For which bill? What list? Bill 9?

Mr. Chairperson: On Bill 9, pardon me. Greg McVicker, private citizen, on Bill 9; and Elsie Flette, private citizen—oh, First Nations of Southern Manitoba Child and Family Services Authority.

An Honourable Member: One more time please.

Mr. Chairperson: Three names, or just the last one?

An Honourable Member: Three names, please.

Mr. Chairperson: Olexandr Kondrushov, private citizen; Greg McVicker, private citizen; and Elsie Flette of the First Nations of Southern Manitoba Child and Family Services Authority.

Before we proceed with the presentations, we do have a number of other items and points of information to consider.

First of all, if there is anyone else in the audience here this evening who would like to make a presentation, please register with the staff person at the table at the entrance to this committee room.

Also, for the information of all presenters here this evening, while written versions of the presentations are not required, if you are going to accompany your presentation with written materials we ask that you provide 20 copies. If you need help with photocopying, please see our staff person and we'll assist you with that.

As well, I would like to inform presenters that, in accordance with our rules, a time limit of 10 minutes has been allotted for presentations, with an additional five minutes allowed for questions from the various committee members at the table here.

Also, in accordance with our rules, if a presenter is not in attendance when their name is called they

will be dropped to the bottom of the list. If the presenter is not in attendance when their name is called a second time, they will be removed from the list of presenters.

I will note that we do have out-of-town presenters in attendance that are marked with an asterisk on the list before the committee members. With that in mind, in what order does the committee wish to hear the presentations this evening?

Hon. Kerri Irvin-Ross (Minister of Healthy Living): Out-of-town presenters first, please.

Mr. Chairperson: It has been recommended to committee that we hear the out-of-town presenters first. Is that agreed? *[Agreed]*

As of 6 p.m. this evening there were over 20 people registered to speak to these bills. Therefore, according to our rules, this committee may not sit past midnight to hear presentations unless the committee agrees to unanimously do so. With this in mind, how late does the committee wish to sit this evening?

Ms. Irvin-Ross: Can we evaluate as we go on? Evaluate at midnight?

Mr. Chairperson: Okay.

Mrs. Bonnie Mitchelson (River East): Mr. Chair—and I think that I would agree with that. We'll take a look at how many presentations are left at midnight and see where to go.

Mr. Chairperson: Okay, thank you. It's been recommended that this committee review later on this evening before the midnight hour to determine whether or not we've concluded the list of presenters and then make a determination at that point in time. Is that agreed? *[Agreed]*

Thank you. Now, before committee members I believe you have copies of written submissions, and written submissions on Bill 9 from the following have been received and distributed to committee members: Bonnie Bryant, Laura Crookshanks, Neta Friesen, Heather Kirkham, Keith Mander, Veronica Marsman, Marie McKie, Leona Schroeder and Vicki Verge.

We also have received written submissions from Doug Dobrowolski on Bill 4, which is being also distributed to committee members.

Does this committee agree to have these documents appear in *Hansard* transcript of these proceedings?

* (18:10)

Mrs. Mitchelson: Yes, absolutely, and, if, Mr. Chair, if you could just go through again, I think we have the written presentations in front of us. But are all of these presentations that have been provided to us from members that are on the list—and could we just—or are some of them?

Mr. Chairperson: My understanding that none of them have been included from the people that are here to present this evening. So you have the copies of those that are not intending on presenting.

And if you wish to have a copy of the list of names that I've just read out, we can provide that for committee members as well, if that's your wish.

Mrs. Mitchelson: Mr. Chair, I would appreciate that.

Mr. Chairperson: Okay, we'll make sure that happens.

Also, prior to proceeding with public presentations, I would like to advise members of the public regarding the process for speaking in these committee hearings. The proceedings of our meeting are recorded by the folks that sit behind me here in order to provide a verbatim transcript. Each time someone wishes to speak, whether it be an MLA at this table, or a presenter at the podium, I first have to say the person's name, and that is a signal to our *Hansard* folks sitting behind me to turn the various microphones on and off.

Thank you for your patience, and we'll now proceed with public presentations.

Before I proceed to call the first name, does the committee agree to have the written presentations appear as a part of the transcript of these proceedings? *[Agreed]* Thank you.

Bill 9—The Social Work Profession Act

Mr. Chairperson: The first out-of-town presenter I have listed is on Bill 9, and the presenter on the committee list is No. 13, Liz Carlson, private citizen.

Is Liz Carlson in attendance this evening? Please come forward, madam.

Good evening, Ms. Carlson. Welcome. I take it you have a written presentation. If you just give it a moment, then we'll distribute to various committee members. Then I'll give you the signal to proceed.

Please proceed, Ms. Carlson.

Ms. Liz Carlson (Private Citizen): Good evening, Mr. Chairperson, Madam Vice-Chairperson and members of the committee. I appreciate the opportunity to speak with you this evening.

I speak with you as a woman who has practised school social work for 11 years, seven of which have been in Manitoba. I speak with you as someone who has experienced social work licensure during the time I practised in Minnesota. I speak with you as someone who has completed both a BSW degree and an MSW, in addition to currently being a doctoral student in the Faculty of Social Work at the University of Manitoba.

I speak with you as a member of MASW, and I speak with you as a person who opposes Bill 9 for a number of reasons. Practising social work in a number of cross-cultural settings has made me keenly aware of the Eurocentric biases present in mainstream social work discourse. Western biases, such as individualism, rationalism, empiricism, materialism, reliance on the medical model, private property and rigid linear views of time, go unquestioned in much of mainstream social work practice.

It is upon these forms of social work that licensure standards are often based. It is my view that such standards would serve to further marginalize Aboriginal, cross-cultural, activist and community-based social workers and modes of social work practice. Having been a doctoral student for the past several years, I have seen that there has been increasing attention in academia to issues of oppression, structural bias, colonialism and epistemological basis, which refers to valuing one way of knowing and experiencing the world over others.

My own academic work has centred on these issues and, as a result, I have done extensive reading and research in these areas. Such reading, along with my personal experience, has taught me about the ongoing and pervasive colonial dynamics in Canadian society whereby those who are privileged, most often white people, are making decisions which restrict and define the lives of those who have been colonized and marginalized. I believe that Bill 9, in its current form, would reproduce such colonial relationships.

Further, I do not have confidence in MIRS to administer an equitable program on licensure

standards for provisional social workers. I have not seen evidence of their awareness and support of other-than-mainstream methods of practice. In addition, I have seen little attempt to dialogue with community groups such as the Aboriginal Social Workers' Society and the Centre for Anti-Oppression Studies.

On July 16th, an e-mail was sent out by MIRS to their members stating that their board had decided to delay the printing of a previously solicited paper which provided an alternate view of Bill 9 because, quote, the publication of the article at that time would be contrary to the strategic goals and interests of MASW-MRISW, end quote. When I replied to this email, stating that I believe the strategy of delaying discussions which challenge the legislation until after it had passed is undemocratic and self-serving, I received no reply. I believe that such actions do not represent a body which is committed to dialogue and equity.

While practising social work in Minnesota, I got a taste of the licensure process in that state. I found that, as a new social worker with a low salary, the fees were exorbitant. Jumping through all the hoops necessary for the licensure process was a difficult and time-consuming task for which I saw little gain for social work clients. It seemed to me to be a bureaucratic exercise with the main result of providing jobs for those who administer it.

I realize that many provinces and many states currently have social work licensure legislation similar to that which is being proposed in Bill 9. However, I believe that Manitoba now has the opportunity to set itself apart as a leader in a move to more progressive outlooks on social work practice and standards. I urge the committee to carefully consider the possible outcomes of Bill 9 and how issues of power and oppression are at play.

It is my recommendation that Bill 9 not pass in the Legislature, or pass with heavy revisions such as those recommended by the Aboriginal Social Workers' Society in Manitoba and the Centre for Anti-Oppression Studies.

Thank you for your time and consideration of these matters. I welcome any questions.

Mr. Chairperson: Thank you, Ms. Carlson, for your presentation this evening. Questions of the presenter?

Mrs. Mitchelson: Thank you very much, Ms. Carlson, and appreciate your presentation and your point of view.

Can you just elaborate for me on the amendments that might be coming forward from the Aboriginal Social Workers' Society in Manitoba—and I think they are on the list to present a little bit later on—and the Centre for Anti-Oppression Studies. Have you—could you just share with the committee what those amendments might be? Are you opposed completely to any type of a regulatory body, or is there amendments that could be made that would make it workable?

*(18:20)

Ms. Carlson: I believe that—my first preference would be to have no licensure for social work in Manitoba. My second preference would be that, if the legislation were to pass, that considerations be made to have amendments, which, I believe, will be posed by later presenters representing the Manitoba Aboriginal Social Workers' Society in Manitoba and the centre for anti-oppressive studies.

I have read—I don't have a copy here, but I have read some of their suggestions. And some of this has to do with the ways that the fees for licensure are distributed and that some of the monies would go towards social justice issues, and that some of the monies would go towards the establishment of a parallel college that is governed by Aboriginal peoples and Aboriginal social workers in Manitoba.

So those are some of the main points, but I believe you'll get more detail as the presentations go on.

Hon. Rosann Wowchuk (Minister of Finance): Well, I'd just like to thank you, Ms. Carlson, for taking the time in sharing your views and your experiences, having worked in other jurisdictions, and thank you for joining us this evening and sharing your thoughts.

Ms. Carlson: Thank you very much.

Mr. Chairperson: Thank you, Ms. Carlson.

The next out-of-town presenter I have on the list is John Chudzik. I hope I've pronounced the last name correctly. Private citizen, John Chudzik. John Chudzik. Seeing that Mr. Chudzik is not here at the present time, his name will drop to the bottom of the list.

I believe that concludes the out-of-town presenters we have for the two bills.

Is it the will of the committee, then, to proceed with the remaining list of names starting with Bill 4? *[Agreed]* Thank you.

Bill 4—The Community Revitalization Tax Increment Financing Act

Mr. Chairperson: We'll now proceed to Bill 4 presenters, The Community Revitalization Tax Increment Financing Act.

And the first presenter we have is Stefano Grande, Downtown BIZ.

Good evening, sir, welcome.

Mr. Stefano Grande (Downtown BIZ): Good evening, thank you.

Mr. Chairperson: Do you have a written presentation?

Mr. Grande: It's a verbal presentation.

Mr. Chairperson: Please proceed when you're ready.

Mr. Grande: Thank you. As a downtown stakeholder, a role of the Downtown BIZ is to represent our 1,400 downtown business members in matters related to improving our downtown. The BIZ regularly advocates for the right public policies and programs that will lead to the success.

The BIZ is a proponent of Bill 4. We are pleased that the Province has determined that the best approach to revitalization of our downtown, its more difficult and challenging districts and properties, is through the creation of a TIF bill.

Madam Vice-Chairperson in the Chair

There are dozens of properties, from surface parking lots to derelict, underutilized historical buildings in our downtown and districts like north Main Street, Chinatown, and even the Exchange District, which have been relatively quiet for decades in regards to our revitalization-wide perspective.

With none of these properties and neighbourhoods really generating what they could actually generate from an economic development and taxation perspective and, in turn, not contributing to a fully renewed downtown, giving more reasons for people to visit, live and work.

We have met—we have met face to face and dialogued with many developers and government

representatives from across North America, from Milwaukee to Columbia, from Long Beach, California, to Washington, D.C. Most downtown developers across North America, as well as public officials, will tell you that wide-scale downtown revitalization and economic development cannot occur in any comprehensive manner without this tool. We are pleased that this tool is now being introduced into our province and our city.

It's a tool that acknowledges the basic fact that to properly undertake revitalization, the issue associated with the term "economic gap" must be addressed in a broad manner. It's a tool that acknowledges the basic fact that development and redevelopment efforts in our downtown are more costly than in the suburbs and that the playing field needs to be balanced if the private sector is returned even more.

The arrival of a TIF also acknowledges that more public investment in the downtown is a good public policy, an investment in creating a more sustainable city, which more and more cities are more clearly understanding today. A city which grows and develops up, which means more density, is more financially environmentally sustainable than a city that grows wide, which is known as suburban sprawl. This is no longer rhetoric; it's fact, based on 20 years of research.

This TIF legislation is perhaps one of the most important economic development tools providing significant opportunities for planned downtown renewal and growth. Getting it right could mean unprecedented downtown development in the next two decades with important implications from my members, the business community downtown. This new bill, as such, is important.

With over 20 years of TIF successes and failures in the U.S. there are some key guiding principles, which can be utilized by our City and by our Province so that we don't make the same mistakes and, as a result, lose valuable time and our ongoing—in our ongoing revitalization efforts.

While the provincial bill determines the necessary steps required to establish a TIF, its language and guiding principles will clearly set the stage for clarity and success. At every opportunity let's learn from these practices to guarantee our success and provide clear direction to administration from year to year.

I'd like to just highlight six important principles that have been identified by a majority of all of the legislators in the U.S.

Number 1, when a district-wide approach is taken to implement TIFs that promote the need for comprehensive planning, this is something, a language which isn't found in the bill. This leads to greater economic development and much more taxation for everyone.

TIF public dollars should only be used to address blights and where there are economic gap issues. Let's define blight at the standard within the legislation and reference this economic gap issue.

Take the guesswork out of tax increment amount that will be—that will fund the projects, eliminating any surprises for the developer down the road making it easy to understand. As I read 8.3 of the bill, it's very unclear in my mind as to what that—what the tax increment amount is.

Just as important it is critical that the funds derived from the TIF district property can be used for other projects within that district creating economic multipliers, quickening a revitalization, showing public commitment, allowing for further reinvestment by the same and other developers.

Community involvement in education has been identified as critical factors for success. This is fundamental particularly at this—at this stage.

The process must be driven by the community. It must be accountable through a planning process, and the need for a business plan in the areas of district planning for TIFs.

These are just six of the more fundamental principles identified as success factors and are six of the principles that we would like to see strengthened in the—in the words of the legislation.

Let's not leave any of these good lessons to chance or goodwill. I think we have an incredible opportunity here to move downtown revitalization forward and even more quickly, let's learn from our colleagues throughout North America. Thank you.

Madam Vice-Chairperson: Thank you, Mr. Grande, for your presentation.

Do members of the committee have any questions for the presenter?

Mr. Stuart Briese (Ste. Rose): Madam Chair, and thank you, Stefano, for your presentation here tonight, and I'll look forward to seeing your

recommendations in writing so that I can—when you're running them by me it was a little hard to catch them all.

There are some things about the TIF bill that I think deserve some question. Number one, I would ask you if you think the areas in the bill should be defined to certain areas. Like you—you're representing the Downtown Biz. Now, the way the bill is written the TIF zone could go anywhere in the province.

Do you think the TIF zone should be defined only to blighted areas or brown-field areas or areas where development is harder to get moving?

Mr. Grande: Yes. I believe that that's the intent of using tax dollars to address market challenges and, clearly, there are some market challenges in our downtown, as well, maybe other parts of our province.

Mr. Briese: Madam Chair, I assure you there is nowhere in the bill that it says anything about a defined area, the—specific to any particular area of the city or to certain areas that have trouble getting development.

* (18:30)

Secondly, I would ask that, when you have a TIF zone, any of the incremental tax, school tax we're talking about here, because what the municipal tax, municipality has the right to do whatever they want with the municipal tax. They can stimulate business, they can forgive taxes, they can do all those things to help development.

But the school tax has always been sacred to going to education, to educating children in this province, and the thing that comes to mind is, if your TIF development happened to be a large apartment block complex or something like that which put maybe another 200 children into a particular school in that area, and all that tax is being directed toward the development of that project, who picks up the extra cost of another 10 or 20 teachers in a school and all the needs that are presented by the extra children hitting the school system?

Mr. Grande: It's a good question. I think one of the things that you'll find, that research tells you, is the increment not only occurs at the project site but it occurs at a downtown-wide basis.

And I give you a really, a really good example: if you take a look at the value of properties across the

MTS Centre before the MTS Centre were built, they were fairly depressed, they were fairly low. Take a look at those properties today. Education taxes are up, property taxes are up, but yet, there was significant public investment in the MTS Centre. So one of the things that you'll find, as we've seen in other cities, is that the entire neighbourhood will benefit because of revitalization. And if it, if it wasn't for those tax increment—I guess, policies or subsidies or grants, however you'd like to define them—that project would never take place, and, as a result, the neighbourhood wouldn't be stabilized, increase in property values wouldn't necessarily go up, and I think, I think that's something important to remember.

And so, while the school board might be thinking solely, specifically in regards to that property, unless the issues of that property are addressed from a physical and economic perspective, you know, the surrounding increases won't necessarily come to bear.

Mr. Briese: Yeah, I'm not going to try to debate the issue with you, but the problem would still be that the school division, at some time during the 25, possible 25-year time frame of this, could become very short of cash and because they cannot access any of that cash out of the TIF zone for that—terms of that agreement, they would raise the school tax on the surrounding properties. The other properties in the division would see a tax increase because they couldn't get the tax money from the particular project.

I think I'll leave it at that and see if any of the other colleagues want to raise any questions.

Madam Vice-Chairperson: Any other questions?

Mr. Drew Caldwell (Brandon East): Just quickly. I wanted to thank you very much for the presentation. My constituency is Brandon, Manitoba, and the downtown of Brandon is primarily in Brandon East, and this is a major, major tool in not only rejuvenating the core area of the city of Winnipeg and the urban environment in the city of Winnipeg, but in my home community, and I know in other communities around Manitoba. So I thank you for that, those remarks on TIF.

Madam Vice-Chairperson: No other questions? Seeing none—oh, Mr. Minister?

Hon. Ron Lemieux (Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs): Thank you very much,

Stefano, I appreciate your comments and taking the time this evening to come out, and with regard to your good example on MTS Centre which we all know has been a real positive for downtown.

I just want to say, at this point, thank you very much for making your comments and, again, for taking the time to come down here and give your perspective on how you see TIF working in a very, very positive way for economic development. Thank you.

Mr. Chairperson in the Chair

Mr. Chairperson: Thank you, Mr. Grande.

The next presenter we have on our list is Loretta Martin, CentreVenture Development Corp.

Good evening, Ms. Martin. Welcome. Do you have a written presentation, ma'am?

Ms. Loretta Martin (CentreVenture Development Corporation): No.

Mr. Chairperson: Please proceed when you're ready then.

Ms. Martin: Good evening, honourable members, Madam Chair, members of the Legislative Assembly. I'm Loretta Martin. I'm the Director of Development of CentreVenture Development Corporation. Thank you for the opportunity, allowing us to make this presentation. Ross McGowan, our president and CEO, sends his regrets that he's currently out of town and unavailable to be here today to speak to this very important legislative bill.

Firstly, we'd like to congratulate the government for taking the initiative to introduce this legislation, legislation that has the potential to provide provincial government and municipal governments with a financial tool through which economic growth can be advanced. Today it is believed by many that tax increment financing is the most popular form of public finance for economic development projects throughout North America.

For those of you who may not be too familiar with CentreVenture, we're an arm's-length agency of the City of Winnipeg. CentreVenture was created by the City in 1999 to be an advocate and catalyst for business investment, development and economic growth in downtown Winnipeg.

From the beginning of the 1970s and up to and including most of the '90s, downtown districts of

many North American cities, including Winnipeg, were allowed to disintegrate—I'm not a public speaker. No one's more sorry that Ross isn't here than I. From the beginning of the '70s up to and including most of the 1990s, the downtown districts of many North American cities, including Winnipeg, were allowed to disintegrate as there was an exodus of business and residents relocating to the suburbs. Although it took decades to fully realize and appreciate the negative effects of this exodus, in the last decade revitalizing downtown neighbourhoods and business districts has become a priority of governments in a vast number of North American cities.

Tax increment financing is a powerful tool that can address many needs within a community. CentreVenture's reason for presenting today is to encourage you to explore the opportunities with the City of Winnipeg and by extension, CentreVenture, to identify opportunities for implementation of tax increment financing initiatives in downtown Winnipeg. While CentreVenture, in co-operation with our shareholder, the City of Winnipeg, has achieved significant successes over the past decade by utilizing municipal tax-related incentives and providing developers with up-front financing of these tax incentives, it could be said that the one-off, relatively easy development opportunities have been capitalized on and more effort, financial resources, and focus planning and policy is going to be required to take downtown Winnipeg to the next level of success.

By saying that, I don't mean to imply the Province hasn't been at the table with us throughout the revitalization efforts. You have, in many major development projects, MTS Centre, Manitoba Hydro, of course, moving downtown, a provincial government Crown corp., Winnipeg Regional Health Authority, to mention a few. Those are just a few examples of how the Province has been at the table with us and we're indeed grateful for the ongoing commitment.

However, despite all of our combined efforts in the past 10 years, in downtown we still have areas of blight. Some of them consist in a single block, some are encompassing numerous blocks. We have insufficient residential density, insufficient amenities to support residential density and the downtown work force, underutilized heritage and non-heritage buildings, vacant and boarded-up heritage and non-heritage buildings, and acres and acres of surface parking lots. The existing programs and

current financial resources are not going to be sufficient to advance further significant redevelopment in a timely manner, if at all.

Tax increment financing to incent private sector investment could well be the tool that is capable of advancing downtown Winnipeg to the point where incentives of any kind will no longer be required. It could advance it to the point where residents and business alike will think downtown first when making business and personal decisions.

While there are many variations of implementation of tax increment financing, comprehensive research has been done and numerous examples of best practices have been compiled and are available as a resource to us. We have the benefit of drawing upon decades of experience of other cities when considering how tax increment financing can be effectively applied here.

*(18:40)

Using tax increment financing to provide direct incentive to developers, target blighted areas by creating TIF zones or using tax increment financing to address social issues and social housing are only but a few ways that TIF can be implemented. Whatever model or combination of models will be required to take downtown Winnipeg to the tipping point will have to be the result of a comprehensive municipal and provincial planning effort and driven by public policy.

We do recognize that in other cities, and possibly here as well, it's perceived that using incremental school division and education taxes to promote development is not the proper use of such funds. It is often perceived that monies are being taken out of the public school system. This is, in fact, not the case. If tax increment financing is used to spur development that would not otherwise occur, or in some cases utilized to speed up development so that the education system sooner becomes a benefactor of long-term financial return, the tax base of the school divisions and the education are protected under Bill 4 as proposed.

Having said that, while CentreVenture is certainly in favour of ensuring school divisions and public education are not negatively affected by TIF financing initiatives, we do believe that subsection 8(3) of Bill 4 makes effective TIF implementation problematic.

Subsection 8(3) provides for the predesignation assessed value of a property to be increased in line

with the average increase in assessed values of non-designated properties in the same class. Without having a fixed based year assessment value, it's extremely difficult to quantify to a private developer the amount of the incentive they could expect to realize and makes financing against future incremental taxes extremely difficult for initiatives such as land assemblies or other public realm improvements that require upfront capital investment.

In theory, even if the predesignation value is fixed, the school divisions will immediately benefit in the short term due to increase in assessed values of properties surrounding the declared TIF zone or TIF project. To utilize—to use a real life example, we can look at the recent Waterfront Drive development and analyze the development as if it had been designated a TIF zone. Let's assume the undeveloped parcels would have had their predevelopment assessment value frozen but the assessed values of the adjacent properties would not of been.

A comparison of the assessed values of the adjacent properties prior to development and the assessed values post-Waterfront Drive development show an increase in assessed values of these adjacent properties to be between 130 percent and 140 percent, well above the average increase in—at commercial property assessed values elsewhere. Hence the education system would have immediately benefited from the development.

Of course, Waterfront Drive didn't require tax increment financing to make it happen, but it illustrates how immediate the benefits of development can be to the education system by positively affecting adjacent and surrounding property values.

On the development side of the fence, a developer—if a developer's enticed to proceed with the promise of tax increment financing incentives, and bases a business decision to proceed in anticipation that this incentive is gonna be worth a specific value, however, as a new development stimulates an increase in assessment value of adjacent properties or existing similar properties in the area, the newly developed property assessment value also increases decreasing the incremental taxes that can be provided back to the developers in incentive. This is very difficult from past experience. It's been proven to entice private sector investment if

incentives cannot be quantified at the point of development.

We respectfully ask that you consider amending Bill 4 to freeze the predestination assessed value or explore the possibility of a compromise with the school divisions to place a cap on the predesignated assessment value increases.

The proposed Bill 4 can be an extremely effective tool for promoting development if implementation adheres to strong public policy guidelines and is viewed as a community leveraging opportunity to encourage direction and flow of development, a goal CentreVenture is strongly supportive of.

We welcome an opportunity to be involved in consultations with your government and the City of Winnipeg regarding potential opportunities for tax increment financing in downtown Winnipeg. Thank you for your time and, again, applaud your initiative in introducing the bill.

Mr. Chairperson: Thank you very much for your presentation, Ms. Martin. Questions to the presenter?

Mr. Briese: Once again, I'll look forward to reading your presentation in *Hansard* just to catch all the nuances, but thank you very much your presentation.

Do you think there should be a but-for clause, some kind of test in the TIF legislation that says, would this have happened without TIF? Would this development have happened without TIF being part of it?

Floor Comment: Yes, I agree with that.

Mr. Chairperson: Ms. Martin? Ms. Martin, you have to wait until I recognize you to allow your microphone to be turned on, if you don't mind. Thank you.

Ms. Martin: Oh, sorry. Yes, I agree with the but-for clause being added to the legislation or some form of, for lack of a better word, litmus test, as to whether a TIF is, should be applied in a certain area or a certain project.

Mr. Briese: The reason I asked that question is I can't, for the life of me, figure out why—and I'll ask you if you have any answers on it—why wouldn't every developer ask for a tax incremental financing? If this is going to be there, and as open as it is in this legislation, then every developer that's going to do some kind of a project should be asking for a TIF, for some upfront grant money for financing.

Ms. Martin: I agree. If there's no prequalifications, every developer will be knocking on the door, and not every development is deserving of—or requires tax increment financing to make it happen.

Mr. Briese: And would that indicate that we're going from a system that is funded on development with—funded with either municipal, which is allowed already; we can already do a TIF with municipal part of the tax bill—with municipal money or provincial money, leading on the development and going to the education tax off property to make a development happen? That's what I think would happen.

Is that what you think would happen because the only difference in here from what we have already is that we're going to take the education tax off the incremental—the incremental education tax off these properties?

Ms. Martin: Yes, that is, indeed, I believe, how the bill will be implemented. As you—as you noted, municipal tax incentives have been around and being utilized for a number of years. As I alluded to in my speech, we've come to a point in downtown revitalization that the more difficult projects to advance it in any significant way in a much shorter period of time are going to require more resources and more effort, stronger policy and, of course, financial resources. The TIF legislation is potentially one way to access resources to enable us to continue work in a bigger—with bigger efforts, more emphasis. Is it the right way to access additional funds from the Province? That's not for me to decide.

Mr. Briese: One of the other concerns I have about the bill and one that has reared its head in the U.S.A.—and I've been looking at various models that they've used down there—when they go out at the front of this development, they estimate what the school tax is going to be over that period of years and base their grant according to that.

Nowhere in the legislation—and I'd like your comment on it—but nowhere do I see if the markets go the other way and if that doesn't generate quite as much tax as is anticipated, who is going to pick up the shortfall? And in the States that has happened, and it's really happened with the crash they've had in the last two years down there where TIF projects have not generated the tax that was put out in front as a grant to the developer.

Who would you see should be picking up any shortfall that may happen?

* (18:50)

Ms. Martin: I would hope that, through the planning exercises, we don't—we don't—and I say the provincial government, municipal governments put themselves in a position where future taxes are borrowed against to such a level that there will be huge risks. And I know the instances you're speaking of in the U.S. They borrowed up to a value of 70 to 80 to 90 percent of what the incremental taxes were estimated to be. Prudent practice say you wouldn't borrow against future incremental taxes more than 40 to 50 percent to get things done, and that's all going to be a function of the planning behind a TIF program or TIF programs.

Mr. Lemieux: Well, I just want to thank you Ms. Martin, for coming out this evening and passing on your views with regard to this bill. I know there's a lot of other people waiting to speak on Bill 9, so I'm not going to raise any questions at this moment, but I thank you very much for your comments. Thank you.

Mr. Chairperson: Mr. Lamoureux, we're out of time, sir.

Thank you, Ms. Martin, for your presentation this evening.

Next presenter I have on the list is Bruce Alexander, Manitoba School Boards Association.

Good evening, sir.

Mr. Bruce Alexander (Manitoba School Boards Association): Good evening.

Mr. Chairperson: Welcome. Do you have a written presentation?

Mr. Alexander: Yeah. Here's the copies.

Mr. Chairperson: Thank you. Just give us a moment; we'll distribute to the various committee members.

Please proceed, Mr. Alexander, when you're ready, sir.

Mr. Alexander: Thanks, Mr. Chairman. My name is Bruce Alexander. I'm one of the suburban regional directors of Manitoba School Boards Association, and I'm standing in for our president, who is unable to attend this evening.

This is a topic that's really about five miles across and about 10 miles deep, so I'm going to really whistle through this as quickly as possible, and I invite your questions when I'm finished.

Manitoba School Boards Association has a role and responsibility of leadership, advocacy and

service to our member boards and also to every single one of our students in our public schools of Manitoba. Our primary job is providing the resources for the best access quality and choice in the educational program for those students. Manitoba, like our sister provinces in western Canada, relies heavily on property tax to fund education, and for that reason this matter is of great interest to Manitoba School Boards.

Tax increment financing has had some success, and we can look at the record in the United States to see that. There have been some difficulties there, but there have been successes. In the successes, the focus is on blight and brownfield redevelopment and to stimulate development in areas where this would otherwise not have happened, in other words, the but-for example that we've heard about.

Currently, municipalities in Manitoba have the authority to use tax increment financing for this purpose, and we recognize the successes of this. But Manitoba School Boards is quite concerned about the measure that's designed in this bill where this would be pooled and administered through the province. We would feel much more comfortable with TIF if it was something that was an adjustment to the authority that municipalities have. Municipalities are the tax collectors for school boards, and if TIF was administered on a local level through municipalities with the adjustment to involve provincial and local school tax, that would be something that Manitoba School Boards really would find more acceptable than what we have here.

Our position is that local authorities, school boards and municipal councils, are the closest democratic bodies to a community, and for that reason they are really quite responsive and very accountable. We feel that that kind of a redesign of this measure to change the authority that municipalities now have would be very worthwhile. So we're not opposed to TIF; we just think that this particular measure is a map that the government is using that doesn't really match to the terrain over which they're flying.

We also feel that Bill 4 is significant in what it may put at risk for school divisions. Government direction now is to use schools more as community infrastructure than they've ever been before, and, if resources are not there to provide for these additional requirements, that's going to be difficult to meet that direction that government has taken.

So, again, we see that there should be some change in the authority to municipalities. We see no need for this to be a provincial situation.

Public involvement is very important in this and, at local level, public hearings and involvement in the community it's easy and it's necessary in this kind of thing, and we feel that the way that the legislation is written that it doesn't really provide sufficiently for both the school division and the municipal council to be involved.

A very significant part of this legislation, or whatever regulations are pursuant to this in the future, is a test also known as a but-for test. This test, where there's some criteria laid down to determine whether this development would have been likely to take place without government support through this measure, that's really a very important part of this, and it's one that we see in research that we did at Manitoba school boards, in Oregon, Colorado, Illinois. So we don't see that but-for test and we think that's an absolutely necessary part of this.

As well, another qualification other than but-for is the definitions of blight and brownfield. We, in our city, have areas that have been referenced by previous speakers, and those areas really are the priority and a set of criteria should be used that would have some flexibility, but it would also codify and define what really is community revitalization. And to Manitoba school boards, that is areas that are brownfield, obsolete, industrial developments or those residential areas that have become blighted.

The designation period of this is very long: 25 years. It's a generation, and it seems to Manitoba school boards that that length of time for designation must contemplate initial borrowing to fund the TIF program, and that, we feel, is something that really has some risks in it. Because what we're doing is looking into the future and saying that a particular development is going to be worth X on its assessed value, producing Y tax dollars. And we really don't know what the business cycle is going to do. Most particularly with this kind of thing we don't know what interest rates are going to do. So what we are doing is really taking a bit of a bet on a future value that we don't really know what it will be, and we don't know when it will be at that peak value that we hope for. So that is a bit of concern about any debt that would be incurred for this.

We feel that the provisions in Bill 4, at section 4, for consultation are a good start. We feel that, in section 15, the audit and reporting provisions are,

again, welcome. In section 15, though, we see some information about the use of the grants and we have some concerns about that because, in essence, this should focus on the built infrastructure that's going to generate future assessment to offset the cost of TIF. And we see things in section 15 that don't refer at all to the built infrastructure. They refer to things like community activities, cultural activities, things of that nature, and those things, really, it's a very nebulous connection to the built infrastructure and what we may see as an increased value in assessment later on.

We also, in respect of this, have some concerns about proximal designations, areas that are close to an initial TIF designation, that they can be designated as part of a TIF, and we are concerned that if the authorities notice that there is an increase in assessment in an area that's non-TIF that is adjacent, and that area is included without any development of the built infrastructure, that really, that's taking advantage of something that really is very important future revenue for school divisions.

So proximal development, we feel, in the act, at section 4, it should state very clearly that there must be something added to the built infrastructure for that designation.

* (19:00)

Predesignation value in section 8 is also of concern to us. We don't know what will happen in the future with a TIF development. Again, we don't know when that value's going to come on line and the predesignation value is extremely important for a school division. And what section 8 says, that would advance by the average percentage in that property class and that may be a little bit of a difficulty because when we're talking about TIF and the projects that are mentioned in our province already, the airport development and BRT, those are, in many times, things that are not on the tax rolls but are in classes that are portioned fairly low. So in looking at this predesignation value, it's important, I think, that we look at a percentage that advances at the general rate of increase in that jurisdiction, not at the rate of increase in that class. Because, having been on a school board since 1986, I've lived through a time when property assessment in Winnipeg was flat and declining and mill rates were increasing because of that. So the predesignation value to be tied to an average, preferably of the properties in the jurisdiction rather than in that class, very significant for the future of school divisions.

Section 15, I referred to earlier, and that's the essence of what this revitalization is all about. Government needs to be careful about what they put into the act, for what can qualify for payment and we think it should be restricted to things that are going to influence the built environment to raise assessment.

And those things in there that refer to cultural groups and things like that, we feel that that's the business of another department, the Department of Culture, Heritage and recreation. And what this legislation should focus on is the hard asset that's going to benefit the community in the ways that previous speakers have mentioned, both in terms of social effect, economic effect, tax effect and culture.

I invite your questions.

Mr. Chairperson: Thank you, Mr. Alexander, for your presentation. Questions of the presenter?

Mr. Briese: Thank you, Mr. Alexander. I certainly agree with your rationalization that this is debt financing and don't think about this as a whole lot else.

But what I did want to do a little question on, is we're aware of the Calgary TIF and I think you probably can enlighten me a little bit. I believe in Alberta the school tax is all collected by the Province, not gathered by the municipality. And I'd like a comment on that on how that would affect TIF financing differently in Calgary than it would here, if it would.

And, secondly, in the U.S.A. where there are quite a number of TIFs, it's my understanding that education is the responsibility of the state down there. So just about all the TIFs down there are dealing with what I would think would be the municipal level of tax, not with school tax. Now, would that—am I right with that view or is that—we invite your comments.

Mr. Alexander: The United States is similar to Canada. The dependence on property tax in the United States for supporting schools ranges from 4 percent to 92 percent. So you can see that there's a very broad range and a TIF program would be, have to be, particularly designed to address that.

But just going back to my previous remarks, municipalities currently have the authority to do TIF for revitalization. And rather than have this administered with a pooled provincial fund,

Manitoba school boards would see that it's more acceptable, given that the municipalities collect the tax that the TIF would act on the school tax at the local level. And then there would be a really good tie-in to planning. There would be good accountability to the local community 'cause school boards work with municipal councils to look at future school requirements in case a TIF would generate a lot of additional students that would cause us to need more teachers and add more cost.

Mr. Briese: Was it my understanding from your presentation that you believe that these, the TIF zones, should be limited to blighted areas and brownfields and those type of areas?

Mr. Alexander: Excuse me. That's correct.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Inkster): So, for clarity, the School Boards Association would like to see the bill killed then, ultimately, or do they have any support for the bill itself?

Mr. Alexander: We don't see that the bill necessarily needs to be killed. We see that the authority is wrongly placed, and the authority should be with the municipality and possibly augmented to include that incremental tax that's gathered in that municipality rather than to have a provincial fund established which would be administered provincially.

One of the things that local people, at least in my community, like is that their property taxes are spent locally, that they see the effects of it, and there is a provincial property tax in Manitoba, but right now the significant tax on property for education is local. And I know in the area that I live in and that I represent they tell me regularly that when the taxes are gathered in they want to see their own community and their own school benefit because they see a very close relation with property tax and the local community, and they see that increment consumption taxes are more the Province's business.

Mr. Lamoureux: This is the second go-around for the government in terms of bringing forward TIF legislation. My understanding, and I could be wrong on this, but my understanding is that this legislation is subjected to municipal approval in order to go ahead with a TIF project. Would that not, at least in good part, address your concern if that's the case?

Mr. Alexander: Well, I think that it could in part, but again it's a nebulous connection. If the—if the TIF is done through the municipality with augmented

authority, that would include the school taxes collected in that municipality, that is very contained, very clear to the local people as to what's going on.

Mr. Lemieux: Well, thank you very much, Mr. Alexander. Thanks, Bruce. It's been a few years since we taught together at Ken Seaford, Maples, but you were very articulate then in making your point, and sometimes we agreed to disagree, but you were always—your heart was always in the right place on a lot of issues.

So thanks, Bruce, for this evening, and I know there's a lot of speakers on Bill 9 to follow, so I won't press any questions at this point. Thank you.

Mr. Alexander: Yes, sir. I'd like to say welcome and thanks again for the opportunity to speak and share our thoughts with you because I think that you'll find that all school trustees in Manitoba, they come right from the heart because it's our young people that are first and foremost in our considerations. Thanks.

Mr. Chairperson: Thank you, Mr. Alexander, for your presentation.

Next presenter we have on the list is Lorne Weiss, Manitoba Real Estate Association.

Good evening, Mr. Weiss. Welcome. Do you have a written presentation, sir?

Mr. Lorne Weiss (Manitoba Real Estate Association): Just some speaking notes, Mr. Chairman, if I may.

Mr. Chairperson: Then please proceed when you're ready.

Mr. Weiss: Thank you and good evening to you, Mr. Chairman, and the members of the committee. I wanted to thank everybody for giving us the opportunity to speak tonight regarding Bill 4 and the community revitalization levies.

I'm the chair of the political action committee of the Manitoba Real Estate Association, and our association represents over 1,800 realtors in the province, and this represents over 90 percent of all the licensed registrants in the province.

Realtor organizations across Canada have endorsed the concept of quality of life as a basis for political and social advocacy. The principles of our quality of life philosophy include ensuring economic vitality, providing housing opportunities and building better communities.

* (19:10)

We believe that this bill meets these criteria, and we endorse that intent. However, as is often the case, the devil is in the details and, in its current form, the proposed legislation is no exception to this statement. If you'll allow me, I'd like to expand on that statement.

In its present form, this legislation will allow the use of increments and education taxes resulting from increased assessments or new construction in these TIF zones to be applied towards incentives and infrastructure for a period of up to 24 years, or longer if renewed. This will, in effect, entrench the funding of education through property taxes without regard to the numerous reports and studies over the past 50 years which have called on successive governments to reduce the reliance on property taxes to fund education. In addition, it will serve to ignore the inequity of thousands of Manitobans who, because they choose to own cottage or investment properties in our province, are victims of taxation without representation.

The other important issue to consider in this regard is the fragmentation of the province into so many school divisions and the financial impact of deferring tax revenue for a school division will have on property owners within that division. For example, the city of Winnipeg has one tax base and one mill rate covering the entire city. In this same city, there are six school divisions with six separate and smaller tax bases and six different mill rates. Creation of a TIF zone in any one area will mean that the particular school division in that area, which has a much smaller number of properties in its tax base than the city as a whole does, will be funding the required incentives for up to 25 years by deferred revenues, even though the entire region or city benefits. Not only will the host school division lose out in the incremental revenue during this period, if the TIF zone is successful, it will likely have to provide increased services during that time. Who will pay for this? It now appears that will be the property owner only in that school division and not all who will benefit far beyond that division's boundaries.

We would like to see this bill changed so that the tax funding comes from municipal sources and not education taxes. Not only would this broaden the base of funding, it would also deal with the problem of taxation without representation. Failing that, the government should commit to significantly reducing the number of school divisions in the province from

38, and the number in Winnipeg and other urban areas to one each.

The other issue to consider is one of transparency. We strongly believe that the implementation and administration of this act should be by way of an arm's-length special authority made up of stakeholders, with perhaps a ministerial approval and an ultimate sign-off.

This bill does not specify the use of a but-for clause to determine eligibility as in the case—as is the case in other jurisdictions. This is an excellent tool for evaluation and we believe it should be enshrined in this legislation as well.

Mr. Chairman, those are my remarks and I'd be pleased to entertain any questions or comments.

Mr. Chairperson: Thank you very much for your presentation, Mr. Weiss.

Questions of the presenter.

Mr. Briese: Thank you, Mr. Weiss, for your presentation, and I know I used to be on a committee with you that talked about property tax—school tax on property, so we keep crossing paths as time goes on.

One of the things that occurs to me with this bill is one of the things that was referred to as being a possible project on this was rapid transit. Now, I don't know if you know, but I'm going to ask you anyhow, where—a rapid-transit line is not—not got much of a tax base. Where do you s'pose they would propose a TIF, a tax incremental zone, to support rapid transit?

Mr. Weiss: That's a difficult question to answer, but it's an important—it's important issue because we're looking at TIF zones as providing infrastructure for a city as a whole rather than a specific area, then I think that gives even more credence to the position that the funding for this should come from municipal taxes and not from—not from education taxes.

Mr. Briese: Thank you, Mr. Weiss. The—and that is already there. It can be done with municipal taxes. The city of Winnipeg does have a TIF zone in the downtown area dealing with municipal taxes right now.

If this legislation goes through, and you mentioned that they can use the incremental tax for up to 24 or 25 years—I thought it was 25, and you mentioned 24. But do you think any developer would

ask for less than 25 years? I just don't see that they would, but I wonder what your view is on that.

Mr. Weiss: Based on my experience in commercial development and commercial—in order to get funding and financing, that kind of commitment would be very valuable, certainly not less than 20 years. I can't see it being less than 20 years.

Hon. Lemieux: Well, thank you very much, Mr. Weiss, for your presentation, and, on behalf of my colleagues, just thank you very much for taking the time to come out.

Mr. Chairperson: Thank you, Mr. Weiss. Thank you for your presentation, sir.

Mr. Weiss: Thank you.

Mr. Chairperson: Next presenter I have on the list is Peter Squire, Winnipeg Realtors. Peter Squire?

Good evening, sir.

Mr. Peter Squire (Winnipeg Realtors): Good evening.

Mr. Chairperson: Welcome. Do you have a written presentation, sir?

Mr. Squire: No, just speaking notes, and I'll keep 'em very brief 'cause there's a lot of covered ground. That—that's the benefit, I guess, going after, though. So I lose—steal some of my thunder; so I'll just emphasize a few points, and we're certainly working with the Manitoba Real Estate Association on this area.

What I'd just like to touch on quickly—and this is certainly direct experience I've had through Winnipeg Realtors—first of all, our association's over 1,500 members, and we're the oldest, longest running association in the country at 106 years old, 1,500 members, and we do include the entire capital region, not just the city of Winnipeg. And we're hopefully on pace to do another \$2-billion worth of MLS sales activity. That's just more, primarily residential, this year despite all the concerns for the economy. So we're chugging along quite well.

So, obviously, we are interested in development, and we do subscribe to the quality-of-life program Lorne Weiss just mentioned, and that includes enhancing and improving housing opportunities in communities. And that's one thing I wanna just speak to in terms of housing opportunities. That's certainly

something I keyed on in looking at the TIF. We've had the benefit through provincial legislation 1996 to tap into interest monies earned from brokered trust accounts to help us get our Housing Opportunities Partnership program going, or it's called HOP for short. To this date, we've now invested over probably \$5 million 'cause we've also had market-gap funding from the Province since in the last five years, but that got us started in 1997, but we've done over 70 homes, primarily in Winnipeg's west end. And we've definitely helped turn around areas.

So that was the mechanism we didn't have back in the '90s that we thought could really help us, and we did get that idea from the U.S. from—and so we're thankful for that, the government's insight at the time to do that and the continued support all the way up to this day as we are still actively looking at acquiring properties and helping renew Winnipeg's inner city.

In terms of this program, I think it is another tool, and that's how we have to look at it as. So we certainly are supportive of it, and as another vehicle. And I think it has to be very selective and discriminate—just be very discriminatory how you use it because, with anything, you have to have controls and mechanisms to keep those things in place. And some of that's been mentioned, like the but-for test, which we certainly subscribe to. We've certainly seen, and, reviewing some of the experience in the U.S. and even in Calgary, there's a lot of planning and business plans and a real regime around these TIFs to make them work so they will be successful. So it isn't as risky as you might think if you don't define things really properly.

The other concern we have would be on the—and that Lorne mentioned the 24, 25 years—you can go 25 years and you can—at 24 you could say, I wanna renew it for another 24 years. So it can virtually go on for—obviously, forever—a long, long time. And I guess the question we have in terms of this is that, again, without a planning and business plans around these things, it could go on indefinitely.

And one thing that was suggested in the revamping of the—of Bill 4 from Bill 46 is that audit process, and that I think that audit process needs to be more rigorous. And you really should not just be looking at the numbers in terms of grants and evaluating things, but how have you—what designations have you made to this point and where are they progressing with regards to their business plans? So it's not a matter of oh, yeah, we just keep renewing these things every year, that you do. And,

obviously, it's going to depend on the type of property you're looking at. If it's infill housing, that's going to be different than a commercial development. But that's certainly something that would be a concern.

* (19:20)

And, then, I know it's being touched on, some of the authorities, whether it's a special authority or a municipality, but I think we have to be careful again—again, more community involvement and accountability back to the areas that you're targeting. And a case of that proximity, again, how far do you go beyond that designated property, and would that be seen as a potential windfall if you spread that net out further in terms of those education taxes? 'Cause, again, we are very much very part of the education finance coalition where we don't wanna see this program be used in such a way that education tax become that much further entrenched over many, many years. Our, certainly, goal is to see that education tax burden of property reduced, and this goes the other way if it's not used properly.

So, really, in summary, I think it has a lot of merit, but it has to be used very judiciously, with a lot of rigour analysis applied. I think there is a lot of experience with them in other jurisdictions that we can learn from so we aren't starting from scratch. And it certainly can help us with some badly needed areas that have been, you know, clearly identified as areas that, with the but-for test, that without some government help, you're just not going to see that development happen.

And, certainly, just speaking as the past president of HOP, or Housing Opportunity Partnership, I know without the government help in terms of our West End initiative, there's no way we would have accomplished what we've done, and I think there's a lot of people that have benefited well beyond just the houses that we've done. We have helped stabilize an entire area, and helped the tax base to the City of Winnipeg improve as a whole.

I think I'll just wrap it up there. If there's any questions, but I just wanted to—thank you.

Mr. Chairperson: Thank you very much for your presentation, Mr. Squire.

Questions for the presenter?

Mr. Briese: Thank you, Mr. Squire, for your presentation. I really was interested in some of the points you were making there. And I'm going to ask

you the same question I asked an earlier presenter is, do you see any reason why any large project developer, under the way Bill 4 is written right now, would not ask for a tax incremental financing grant up front? And is there anything to stop—or to discourage every developer from doing that, not just in a defined area?

Mr. Squire: Again, that just emphasized the importance of the but-for test. I think you have to have a very document case, and with that community support around that, that this is a property that has to be developed, not a developer coming in with an application of some site they've got that they think will obviously be enhanced by the tax incremental financing.

Mr. Chairperson: Any further questions of the presenter?

Mr. Lemieux: Just to thank Mr. Squire. Thank you very much for presenting this evening. It's nice to see you again. Thank you very much for your comments.

Floor Comment: It was a pleasure speaking to you. I'll let you get on with Bill 9.

Mr. Chairperson: Thank you, Mr. Squire.

Are there any further presenters for Bill 4, The Community Revitalization Tax Increment Financing Act?

Seeing no further public presentations on Bill 4, we'll move to Bill 9.

Bill 9—The Social Work Profession Act

Mr. Chairperson: We have another out-of-town person, for information of committee members, that's indicated an intent to make a presentation, and that is Bert Crocker. I hope I've pronounced that correctly. It's added on to your list.

Mr. Crocker. Good evening, sir, welcome. Welcome, sir. Do you have a written presentation?

Mr. Bert Crocker (Private Citizen): I'm afraid I do not, sir.

Mr. Chairperson: That's fine. Please proceed when you're ready, sir.

Mr. Crocker: Okay. I'm ready as I'll ever be, so I will proceed. My name is Bert Crocker. I currently work with the southern authority, but I'm not speaking for the southern authority, I'm speaking as a private citizen.

I've been a social worker for 40 years as of earlier this month. I've done child welfare most of that time. In the late 1960s, as a baby social worker, I had to go to my supervisor and ask permission to see if we could work out a relative placement for a family situation where the parents were absent, the kids needed help with supports. The extended family could help. I was turned down. The rules were if you're able to do it as an extended family fine, if not, the system will take over. I crossed my own particular Rubicon in the early 1970s. I ended up in civil litigation against my employer, Children's Aid Society of Winnipeg, over, essentially, that issue.

I'm not opposed to licensing, but I don't believe that the provisions to the bill before you are as able to take into account some of the cross-cultural concerns that need to be addressed, and, certainly, they do not take into account the values of self-determination for client groups, particularly minority groups, that the professional social work espouses.

I am not a member of the Aboriginal Social Workers' Society. I'm not Aboriginal. I am a member of MIRSW, but I would urge this committee to adopt the recommendations of the Aboriginal Social Workers' Society.

That basically concludes my presentation. I want to thank you for your time, and any questions I'll be more than willing to try and answer them.

Mr. Chairperson: Thank you very much for your presentation, Mr. Crocker.

Questions of the presenter?

Mrs. Bonnie Mitchelson (River East): Thank you very much, Mr. Crocker, for your presentation, and I will await the recommendations for amendments to this legislation from the Aboriginal Social Workers. Thank you.

Hon. Rosann Wowchuk (Minister of Finance): I do—I'd like to thank you for sharing your experiences with us, and we'll certainly be listening to the other presenters as they come forward. Thank you very much.

Mr. Chairperson: Thank you very much for your presentation, Mr. Crocker.

Mr. Crocker: Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and thank you all. Good evening.

Mr. Chairperson: Evening.

The next presenter I have on the list is Harvy Frankel, as Dean of Faculty of Social Work, University of Manitoba.

Good evening, Mr. Frankel. Do you have a written presentation I see?

Mr. Harvy Frankel (Faculty of Social Work, University of Manitoba): I do.

Mr. Chairperson: Give us a moment and then we'll distribute it to committee members.

Mr. Frankel: Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and good evening—are you ready for me? *[interjection]* No.

Mr. Chairperson: Thank you very much, Mr. Frankel, for your patience, and now it's all been distributed to committee members, you may proceed, sir.

Mr. Frankel: Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and good evening, committee members. This presentation is being made on behalf of the Faculty of Social Work at the University of Manitoba.

Bill 9, The Social Work Profession Act, seeks to protect the title "social worker" by regulating who may use that title. The bill creates the Manitoba College of Social Workers and charges the college with the responsibility of developing the policies and procedures for implementing the act.

The Faculty of Social Work supports regulation of social work practice in Manitoba through protection of title. We believe, however, that several aspects of the proposed legislation warrant serious reconsideration.

While we recognize the government's desire to be inclusive, the criteria for registration as set out in section 10(1) creates the potential for protection of title really to become somewhat meaningless as almost any person may qualify for registration. Further, there's no requirements that applicants must hold a social work degree or equivalent education. Section 10(1)(a)(iii) specifies that one may qualify for registration as a social worker with a combination of, and I'm quoting from the act: "education or training, or both . . . and work or volunteer experience, or both."

Most other jurisdictions have taken a more conservative or, maybe I should say, a more cautious approach. Ontario, for example, allows for a combination of academic qualification and practical experience. That is, and I'm quoting from the Ontario

act: substantially equivalent—and we think this language of substantially equivalent is really quite important—substantially equivalent to an accredited social work degree.

Nova Scotia, Newfoundland and New Brunswick do have provision for equivalent degrees, but do not allow for a combination of training and work that does not result in some form of recognized credential.

Effective regulation based on protection of title ensures a minimum standard for those who choose to identify themselves as social workers. The proposed legislation, rather than protecting the title of social worker, has the potential for creating confusion and ambiguity about who's qualified to call themselves a social worker.

* (19:30)

Section 10(a)(ii) allows one to qualify for registration if one has, and I'm quoting from the act again: "successfully completed any other educational program approved by the board." This provision really allows the college to determine that completion of another educational program is equivalent to an accredited social work degree the purposes of registration.

As the institution that offers the only social work degrees accredited by the Canadian Association for Social Work Education in the province, we take strong exception to legislation that essentially empowers the college to act as an accrediting body.

There are several dimensions to this concern. One is that university degrees in other disciplines might be considered as equivalent to accredited social work degrees. Also, social work degrees from programs that do not meet accreditation standards might be considered to be equivalent to accredited degrees.

Also, credentials at a level other than a university degree may also be determined to be equivalent.

It's our position that acting as an accreditation body is not an appropriate role for the proposed Manitoba College of Social Workers.

Much of the detail regarding implementation and operationalization of Bill 9 is left for the board of the proposed college to develop by-laws and to develop regulations. The proposed legislation mandates student and public representation on the board but, given the nature of the board's tasks, it would seem

reasonable to us to mandate representation from the Faculty of Social Work, as an accredited social work education institution.

Precedent can be found in the legislation for engineers in the province of Manitoba which stipulates that the dean of engineering, or his designate, be represented on the committee that approves board representation. This would at least guarantee that expertise about social work education would make up part of the board's resources.

In conclusion, the Faculty of Social Work at the University of Manitoba supports the regulation of social work practice in Manitoba. I would also offer we have considerable sympathy with the thoughts from the Aboriginal social work society and the centre for anti-oppressive practice.

But we're of the position that the proposed legislation has the potential for creating confusion and ambiguity through ill-defined criteria for registration. In addition, the proposed legislation really, to us, inappropriately enables the college to act as equivalent to an educational accreditation body.

Finally, we believe representation from the faculty on the board of the proposed college should be mandated. Thank you.

Mr. Chairperson: Thank you very much for your presentation, Mr. Frankel.

Questions of the presenter?

Mrs. Mitchelson: Thank you very much, Dr. Frankel, and I appreciate the presentation—well thought out.

I guess I would question and maybe ask you for a comment on legislation that was in place before and legislation that we're seeing before us today, because I believe that the standards were higher in the past, and I would like to know if you've just had a chance to look at that and could make a comment on that.

Mr. Frankel: I'm not quite sure what you're referring to. If you're referring to the act that empowers the Manitoba Institute of Registered Social Workers, that legislation essentially allows people to choose to associate, choose to register, as social workers and holds them, essentially, to a higher standard in terms of education than the current act.

I would add, it's my sense that the proposed legislation is also quite voluntary, that there would be nothing to stop someone from saying, I'm a child welfare worker, and I have a Master's degree in social work. And, you know, one could, I think, do that without registering with the college. At the point one defines themselves as a social worker, then you have to register with the college.

So, in essence, I would agree with you that the act that's currently in force at least has higher educational standards.

Mrs. Mitchelson: Thank you, and I heard pretty clearly your—the whole issue around accreditation and having a college be responsible for accreditation in social work and, at the university, you are the only body that has accreditation—is there—there is no other educational facility within the province that has that role or function?

Mr. Frankel: That's right. We're the only accredited program in the province.

Mrs. Mitchelson: Thank you, and presently in the legislation, there's no provision for anyone from the Faculty of Social Work to be on the board? And so that would be an amendment that we—you would possibly support?

Mr. Frankel: We would absolutely support it, and we would point to the precedent in the act that licenses engineers in the province.

Mrs. Mitchelson: Have you had a chance to look across the country to see whether the standards in the proposed legislation are as high or as equivalent as other provinces?

Mr. Frankel: I have and as one might expect there's tremendous variation. Alberta, for example, separates university level social workers, social workers with accredited university degrees, from people working in the social services who have what we would see as community college education. So they actually have two levels in their legislation. Ontario has two colleges. One for university level, another for community college level workers. So there've been a number of approaches to this. In the Atlantic provinces, one of the approaches is to provide people with a provisional registration as long as they have an education plan that they will meet within some time period. So there's a number of approaches.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Inkster): My question was of a similar nature as Mrs. Mitchelson and that was

about the province of Saskatchewan. Can you indicate if this legislation was to pass as it is without amendment, do you have any sense of a comparison in terms of Saskatchewan versus Manitoba?

Mr. Frankel: I'm sorry. Actually I'm not familiar with the Saskatchewan legislation. I'm sorry.

Ms. Wowchuk: Mr. Frankel, I'd like to thank you for coming forward tonight and sharing your ideas, and I appreciate your comments.

Mr. Chairperson: Thank you very much. Thank you, Mr. Frankel.

Next presenter we have on the list is Leona Schroeder, Manitoba Association of Social Workers.

For information of committee members, before I proceed with the presentation, Ms. Schroeder has previously submitted a written presentation that the committee has agreed to include in the transcript of these proceedings.

Is it the will of the committee to proceed with an oral presentation as well? *[Agreed]*

Please proceed when you're ready, Ms. Schroeder.

Ms. Leona Schroeder (Manitoba Association of Social Workers): Thank you, Mr. Chairperson and members of the committee. My name is Leona Schroeder and I am proud to say that I am a practising social worker for the past 26 years. I am honoured to be able to make this presentation as the president of the Manitoba Association of Social Workers, Manitoba Institute of Social Workers and the chair of the board of directors of that organization.

The board has met regarding the content of this presentation and the key components regarding the legislation and the formation of the College of Social Workers, and these are represented in this presentation.

I also wish to recognize the dedicated social workers who have served before me, many who have retired or who are deceased, who held the vision of a unified regulated school of—College of Social Workers, and I wanted to acknowledge their efforts and dedication and that they're greatly appreciated.

Let me begin with an overall definition of the profession of social work as adopted by the International Federation of Social Work in 2001. The social work profession promotes social change,

problem solving in human relationships and the empowerment and liberation of people to enhance well-being. Using theories of human behaviour in social systems, social work intervenes at the points where people interact with their environment, and the principles of human rights and social justice are fundamental to social work. Wherever people are faced with hardships in their daily lives, social workers are present to assist in mediating the difficulties. Naturally, this results in a profession that is exceptionally diverse in its professional practice and is actively present in all sectors of the society.

* (19:40)

Social work is not a new profession. In Canada the profession's roots date back to the turn of the 20th century, emerging from the British and American models in response to social and economic conditions associated with the rise of industrial capitalism. Formalized social work education in Canada dates back to 1914-1918, when the first schools of social work opened at the University of Toronto and the McGill University.

As human difficulties and social problems have grown in both number and complexity, so has the profession of social work to find a place in all sectors of the community. Professional social workers are now found in hospitals, schools, justice and correctional services, child services and community development organizations, to name but a few, and the profession has grown in its knowledge and capacity to work closely with other human services professions such as medicine, nursing, occupational therapy, psychology and others.

In Manitoba, social workers have maintained a professional association for many years and currently provide both "collegial" and limited regulated functions for its members. Based on the former legislation, the Manitoba institute of social workers in Canada—incorporation act in 1966—now the oldest remaining social work legislation in Canada, social workers in this province can voluntarily seek membership and commit themselves to common standards for education, core values, a code of ethics, standards for professional practice, requirements for annual continuing education and professional accountability. Further, the professional organization provides a strong measure of protection for the public through the availability of a public complaints process, an authority for the investigation of complaints and a capacity to issue disciplinary measures for social work members who are found to

have contravened the public interest and trust in their practice.

However, membership in the professional organization has remained a voluntary matter, and the former legislation provides no recruitment requirement for social workers to commit themselves to these professional standards and practices. Unlike all other human service professionals in this province, social work remains without legislation mandatory membership in a professional regulatory body.

Under the current structure, membership is voluntary for the approximately 900 members of our MASW-MIRSW. There is no protection for the use of the social worker, and any person without benefit of professional affiliation or a requirement for minimum educational preparation may publicly refer to themselves as a social worker. Equally important, there is no means by which the public interest can be protected and no recourse for improperly committed—impropriety committed by those who are not members or for those who improperly represent themselves to the public as a social worker.

Bill 9, The Social Work Profession Act, seeks to rectify these deficiencies in the organizational and the functioning of the profession. The proposed modernization legislation has been in development for many years and it has been supported and promoted by social leaders in Manitoba for several decades with the vision that a Manitoba College of Social Workers might emerge to create common fundamental standards for the regulation of the profession and to safeguard the public interest. The proposed legislation will bring the profession of social work in Manitoba to a contemporary standard and give currency to how the profession manages itself.

The current membership of the professional organization supports The Social Work Profession Act, and at the annual general meeting on May 12th, 2000, a resolution was passed, resolving that the Manitoba government introduce legislation for the mandatory regulation of social workers in the province of Manitoba.

Since the passage of that resolution in the year 2000, there have been numerous letters of support received from individual social work members, non-members alike, as well as organizations that employ social workers, letters of support from comprehensive representation of human service sectors such as the Canadian Association of Social

Workers, the Association of Social Work Boards, other provincial social work professional associations and colleges, the regional health authorities, personal care homes, hospitals, Child and Family Services, school divisions, private practices, social work students, and social workers providing Aboriginal services and social work educators. The board of Manitoba Association of Social Workers/Manitoba Institute of Registered Social Workers also fully supports The Social Work Profession Act and the development of a regulatory college.

As part of the continuous development of the legislation initiative, and in preparation for the introduction of legislation, the Manitoba Association of Social Workers/Manitoba Institute of Registered Social Workers has proactively conducted extensive educational activities. Numerous presentations have provided to a broad range of social workers and employing authorities in order to create an informed awareness within the social work community, employers and social work educators.

Presentations have been delivered throughout the province, and have acted not only as informational sessions, but have also sought to elicit input and opinion from those in attendance. Additionally, a more formalized consultation process has been initiated with several key sectors of the profession, including the Aboriginal social work community, the social justice and advocacy community and the social work educators.

These sectors all hold significant perspectives regarding the legislation and the development of a college of social work, and a thorough understanding of these perspectives is valued and believed to be of a significant importance to the development of the profession as it takes shape through the College of Social Workers.

A number of consultive meetings have already occurred, and more are planned so that the model for the development of the college will be fully informed by the social work community and, as the legislation comes into effect, the college operation will ultimately reflect the values and perspectives of the diversity of the social work sectors.

The Manitoba Association of Social Workers-Manitoba Institute of Registered Social Workers has been working with diligence to prepare for the receiving regulatory authority through this

legislation. In addition to conducting the consultations and educational presentations, the organization has developed a transitional strategic plan that identifies an orderly and well-reasoned process, an administrative and organizational framework that gives consistency to the structure of the college with the terms of the legislation, and the set of foundational principles by which the college development and operation will be guided.

And these guiding principles are as follows: The Manitoba College of Social Workers intends to serve the social work profession and public interest through acting as a central unifying entity to all sectors of the social work community; the Manitoba College of Social Workers will function as an integrated organization, conducting both regulatory and association functions; the regulatory function will serve the profession primarily through the ongoing development of professional standards, values and the codes of conducts, and protect the public interest through access to a complaint, investigation, inquiry and disciplinary process; the professional association function will continue to endeavour to sustain a "collegial" environment within which continuing competency, public education, and activities of common interest and concern to the profession are conducted; the Manitoba College of Social Workers will uphold its principle purpose, which is the protection of the interests of the public, through both the regulatory functions and the enhancement of the social work community, in an effort to achieve optimal standards for the performance of the profession; and the Manitoba College of Social Workers will strive to operate to be as an open and inclusive organization, which seeks to engage representation from all sectors of the social work community; the college intends to operate with the collaborate and consultative relationship with other organizations existing to represent the special interests of the "collegial" social work groups; the board recognizes and acknowledges that there exists a diversity of opinion within the profession, and that not all social workers support and approve the legislation, or the development of the college of social works for the regulation of the profession. With that recognition, the board is committed to continuing an intention to collaborate with the dissenting social workers, and the value—and we value the perspectives of the community in its entirety, to develop a college that achieves and optimizes the best interests of the social work community and the services to the public.

In closing, may I say to the members of the committee that this initiative to achieve regulatory authority within the profession, to build a college of social work, and to create an opportunity for greater unity within the profession, and to ensure that the public interest is protected to a far greater measure, has been a prevailing vision for the social work community.

We have held this aspiration for many years, and have laboured persistently to gain self-regulation, to create accountability and responsibility for the affairs of our profession. To approve this legislation initiative at this time will bring the social work profession in this province into a modern era that is already the norm throughout much of the social work world.

And, with thanks, I respectfully submit this presentation to the committee, on behalf of Manitoba Association of Social Workers-MIRSW. Thank you.

*(19:50)

Mr. Chairperson: Thank you very much for your presentation, Ms. Schroeder. Questions of the presenter?

Mrs. Mitchelson: Thank you very much, Ms. Schroeder, for your comments, a very well-thought-out presentation. I guess just a couple of questions.

When the legislation was being put together, and I know that you were consulted on the legislation, did you see the detail of section 10(1) that talks about the qualifications that people might need in order to call themselves a social worker? Bachelor, Master's or doctoral degree from a school or Faculty of Social Work accredited by the Canadian Association of Schools of Social Work, or has successfully completed any other education program approved by the board, or has a combination of education or training or both, and work or volunteer experience or both.

Were you consulted? Were you aware of that detail within the legislation and did you support that?

Ms. Schroeder: Yes, we were aware of the criteria. But, I guess I need to inform the committee that although that is the criteria, it hasn't really been formalized as to what the qualifications will be to use the title of social work. We had hoped to formulate a committee of—the social work committee sector to formulate some of those criteria and ultimately it would be the responsibility of our registrar to determine who got access to the college. We were

trying to be as very—as inclusive as we possibly could, knowing that there are—that the social work community is a very diverse community and take those things into consideration.

Mrs. Mitchelson: Yeah, so then, in your mind, the definition of a social worker does not include any formal type of education. Because it appears in the legislation that formal education is not a criteria, that training and volunteer experience may qualify someone to register as a social worker. And so I was just wondering whether in part 3, under section 10(1), there's no requirement for any formal academic training.

Ms. Schroeder: My understanding is that there will be a grandfathering clause in for three years in which the register and the guiding principles that are going to be formed with the committee will decide on those requirements. That's about as all I can offer you, I'm sorry.

Mrs. Mitchelson: Thank you very much. And when we listened to Dr. Frankel talk about having someone, he had a bit of concern about the college now becoming the accrediting body for social work. And I guess what you're explaining to me really does indicate that there are no criteria or guidelines at this point in time but the decision will be made by the board. In essence, the board will become the accrediting body for social work. Would that be your understanding?

Ms. Schroeder: Yes.

Mrs. Mitchelson: Just one more question. That would be, do you have any—would you have any exception to an amendment to the legislation that would mandate the inclusion of someone from the Faculty of Social Work to be on the, on the board of—

Ms. Schroeder: Of course not. We would certainly welcome their participation on our board and have invited them in the past.

Mr. Lamoureux: How many social workers would Manitoba actually have? Especially once this legislation is put into effect, that you look into a crystal ball two years from now, any sense of that?

Ms. Schroeder: Your guess is as good as mine. Social workers all don't use a title social worker. Some of them use child protection worker; some use probation officers. So I've seen the number 2,500, 3,000 floating around out there. I have no idea. We have 900 members. So I guess we would have to

wait to see how many line up at our doors to become members.

Ms. Wowchuk: Thank you very much for your presentation. I just—I'm new to this bill, as you know. I've taken it over from another minister, but I've been having a lot of discussion on it. And one of the areas that has been put to me is that many of the nurses, the social workers with degrees tend to be in the clinical area and those without degrees tend to be working in the community. And how do you see the college dealing with that, you know, in the area of when you look at how you can do combined education and training and combination of work? Do you see that as a deterrent for people getting their—do you see the clinical worker—clinical social workers being able to work closely with the other, more of the community social workers in order to have one large body working together?

Ms. Schroeder: I'm not really sure where you got your information about community workers not being "degreed" social workers. My daughter has a Master's in social work and she works for a non-profit organization. So she's a community worker.

I really don't know where you got that information from, you know, so I really can't answer that.

Ms. Wowchuk: Thank you. I'm just sharing with you some of the things that I've heard from people who are working, and I congratulate your daughter for her degree. I certainly do congratulate her and for the work she does in the community.

I'm looking for some input from you as to how we might give some comfort to people who are—may not have a degree, but want to come through the channel of using your combination of their education and training and volunteer experience.

Ms. Schroeder: Well, again, I guess that would be, you know, up to—when we formalize our admission committee with all sectors of the community determine what those criteria are. So I think that that's where the grandfathering clause is in there to help those people prove to the college that they have been, you know, that they have been practising social work. So I think that those are all on a very individual, specialized one-on-one case.

Most of the social workers—I mean, all the social workers that we have right now have degrees. So we are trying to be very accommodating to those social workers who have been working in the community

calling themselves social workers who may not have a Bachelor of social work or an MASW.

I'm not really sure I can answer your question very—on the eligibility part very well, so.

Ms. Wowchuk: Thank you for your presentation.

Mr. Chairperson: Thank you, Ms. Schroeder, for your presentation this evening.

Before we proceed to the next presenter, for information of committee members, we have an additional written presentation that's been circulated to you on Bill 9. It's a written submission by Erika Wiebe.

Is it the will of the committee to have this included in the transcripts of this evening's proceedings? *[Agreed]*

Thank you.

The next presenter we have on the list is Shauna MacKinnon, private citizen. Is Shauna MacKinnon here? Shauna MacKinnon.

Shauna MacKinnon's name will be dropped to the bottom of the list.

Next presenter I have is Tom Simms, private citizen. Tom Simms.

Good evening, sir. Welcome. Do you have a written presentation?

Mr. Tom Simms (Private Citizen): I do.

Mr. Chairperson: Just give us a moment.

Good evening, Mr. Simms. Please proceed when you're ready.

Mr. Simms: Thank you for the opportunity to speak before you this evening. I've been working as a social worker for 30 years in the inner city of Winnipeg. Over those years I've come to learn a number of things. I've learned a lot. I've probably learned more than I've been able to provide in terms of support.

One of the big things I've learned is to honour a wide range of world views. I've also learned about the importance of honouring difference, and I think my vision of the type of social work that I practise is, how do we build a community of difference? How do we get away from the either/ors? How do we look at the ands? Social work isn't a physical science; it's about relationships; it's not linear; and so I'd like to provide some contextual issues before I get into the specifics of why I oppose Bill 9.

* (20:00)

I wanted to start off with a quote from Dr. Martin Luther King, and he talks about the role of the white moderate. And King says, in 1963: I've almost reached the unregrettable conclusion that the Negroes' great stumbling block in the stride toward freedom is not the Ku Klux Klanner, but the white moderate who is more devoted to order than to justice, who prefers a negative peace, which is the absence of tension, to a positive peace, which is the presence of justice. Shallow understanding from people of good will is more frustrating than absolute misunderstanding from people of ill will. Lukewarm acceptance is much more bewildering than outright rejection.

And, for me, around this debate around Bill 9, my motivation is, how do we work for a positive peace? How do we—I'm not interested in working for a negative peace of building some order, I'm interested in how do we build a positive peace, which is the presence of justice. And part of that for me is looking at this whole issue, and I've seen it, and I read the *Hansard* the other day, this issue of standards, this issue of knowledge, and I'm not going to list—I quote these people, I'm not going to list them, but I'm just not winging this off the top of my head.

The role of knowledge. One person has talked about the role of knowledge as being the ultimate test of the validity of knowledge is whether it enhances the capacity of people to live well. And I'd just like to give you some of these images first, and I like to tie them together.

I'd like to talk about indigenous knowledge. No world view has the power to describe the entire universe. The role of indigenous knowledge is to rupture normalized categories of what constitutes valid and invalid knowledges—knowledge—and, simultaneously, to recognize that all knowledges are contested in terms of boundaries and spaces.

And that means is that there are—when I say we have to honour a whole range of worldviews and knowledges, the kind of Eurocentric worldview that is what social work is based on, is one form of knowledge. It isn't the only form of knowledge. It isn't the only form of standards. And that that's why we need to look at that.

The process of decolonization requires that indigenous peoples confront the insulting idea that others know and understand them better than they

understand themselves. And I think this is what we really need to be looking at is: whose knowledge, whose standards are we licensing here? It's all about power. It's all about power. That's what this is all about, and we need to grapple with that issue as a community.

In terms of challenging professional knowledge, and this is another quote that I have for you here: Claims to truth by professionals are really acts of power that protect and serve the dominant culture while silencing alternative knowledges and marginalizing the social groups from which they arise. If professional knowledge does not connect with the people we serve, if it does not resonate with meaning for them, if it is not true to their experience, it becomes an instrument of their domestication.

In other words, we can have all these standards and all this knowledge we want, but in terms of what purpose? Are we improving people's lives? Are we making change? I think some of the benchmarks in our community would say that we've made progress, but we have a long way to go.

The next piece I want to talk about, I've titled it: the community knows best. The idea—and I'm quoting from an individual here: the idea that the community knows best is in many ways a radical notion given that professionals, politicians, academics, researchers, policy analysts, bureaucrats, and others in a position of power, have become used to the idea that they—underline they—know best, and that their proper role is to find solutions for the problems of others, and, if necessary, impose it on them.

The idea that people themselves might know better challenges the very structures and discourses of power that are responsible for their positions of privilege, and so it is an idea that is not always warmly welcomed. And I think social work is different than other professions. There is no linear equation that a plus b equals c. It's based on some values and it's based on relationships, and I think that we need to understand those kind of things.

I also have for you here a quote by John McKnight, who has been a person who is really focussed in on strength-based approach to working in the community. And in 1977 he wrote a book called *Disabling Professions*, and I just have a couple of quotes I want to take from that book. Quote: Professionalized services communicate a worldview that defines our lives and our societies as a series of technical problems. This technical definition is

masked by symbols of care and love that obscure the economic interests of the servicers and the disabling characteristics of their practices. The sum of these disabling characteristics is an ideology that converts citizens to clients, communities to deficient individuals and politics to a self-serving debate by professionals over which service system should have the largest share of the GNP.

He defines the professionalized definition of needs is: You are deficient. You are the problem. And it's important to individualize that because that's where you get the most business. You have a collection of problems.

In terms of the interests of the service systems and their needs, the propositions become we need deficiency. The economic unit we need is individuals. The most productive unit we need is an individual with multiple deficiencies.

The professionalized assumptions regarding the remedy of need—according to McKnight—is: We are the solution to your problem. We know what problem you have. You can't understand the problem or the solution. Only we can decide whether the solution has dealt with your problem.

And, in terms of the needs of the professionalized service systems, these propositions become: We need to solve your problems. We need to tell you what they are. We need to deal with them in our terms. We need to have you respect our satisfaction with our own work, with us monitoring our own standards.

And I want to just digress for a minute here. I remember my friend Lionel Orlikow talking about being at a meeting at St. John's High School. There was this woman there who was having some challenges with her child and they had a case conference. And there was like 12 different professionals—12 different professionals—sitting around that table with different pieces of this woman's life: a welfare worker, a child welfare worker, and God knows what else. And I remember thinking, and, just to illustrate this point, this absurdity, why we have to challenge his professional mentality, is that, you know, the solution probably was, well, you know what? Maybe if there was two more of us, maybe if there was 14 of us sitting around the table we could fix this woman's problem. There is an underlying absurdity about that kind of mentality and that we need to look at doing things differently.

I find a lot of wisdom in a woman by the name of Lila Watson, an Australian Aboriginal woman who says, if you've come to help me, you are wasting your time, but if you come because your liberation is bound with mine, then let us work together.

And I think one of the things that I have a problem with around professionalization is that it becomes looking at what the professional needs are and doesn't look at the wide range of worldviews, and we're going to hear some of them tonight, that there's different forms of knowledges that we need to look at.

The biggest thing when you talk about standards that I learned in the Faculty of Social Work was the whole concept of colonization. Growing up as a white kid in St. Vital, that was not part of my learning or understanding at all. And I've learned a lot and I continue to learn from people about that whole issue of power and the whole impact of colonization.

*(20:10)

I'm concerned about Bill 9 because there was inadequate consultation. Contrary to the presentations of the former presenter, there's been work that's being done, but not enough. And, once again, I don't want to get into an either/or thing. I think it's an and thing, and I'm saying and there needs to be more work to be done around forming a bill that's gonna reflect the community of difference of our community and of our social work community.

I applaud, and others applaud the principled approach that this government has taken on the devolution of child welfare services. People have seen the impact of colonization and the importance for the community to look at having that power and voice to self-determine their own direction.

I would argue that there needs to be a equivalent of that principle put in practice in terms of a college of social workers that is run and governed by the Aboriginal community. I only have 30 seconds left, so I don't have a long time to get into that; others will.

And the other thing I would add to finish off, I think is a red herring what we think of well, there's other dynamics like we want to, you know, address issues of interprovincial trade issues that, I think, that the value of making sure we address decolonization is way more important than the value of addressing that issue of interprovincial trade issues. And I think

if this bill gets passed in the spring, instead of the fall, and if we can get better and more inclusive input in the bill, we are gonna be better as a province, we're going to be better as a social work community for it.

So I'm encouraging people to listen to what people are going to be saying tonight, and I'm encouraging people to take the time to get it right. Thank you.

Mr. Chairperson: Thank you very much for your presentation, Mr. Simms.

Questions of the presenter?

Mrs. Mitchelson: Thanks, Mr. Simms, for your presentation. I always appreciate your comments and your thinking on issues.

Ms. Wowchuk: Thank you as well, Mr. Simms, for your presentation, and you talked about the need for, you know, different thinking and broader representation, and there is going to have to be by-laws that are developed, and in the act it says that, you know, 12 to 15 members with three board members being outside the region, but that they have four board members who are public representatives.

Does that part about having public representatives on that board help you? Do you think that that will, by having those public representatives there, we can get a broader perspective of some of those issues that you're raising?

Mr. Simms: I'll put this in sort of illustrative terms. I don't think, and I'm not gonna speak on behalf of, but I'll throw it out as a concept. I don't think it would be acceptable to the Aboriginal community to have seats on the board of a children's aid society.

I think they wanted something a lot different than that. I think they wanted to do—address the issue of power redistribution. I think they wanted to address the issue of governance and self determination. So that adding spaces on to an existing organization that doesn't reflect some of the historical history of our country and our being and that's been recognized in other forms of legislation, as your devolution legislation, I think that people are talking about a different set of relationships, and it is fundamentally a key part of that. It's about those kind of relationships and a different form of relationships.

The government should be congratulated for working in that direction in the child welfare area. That is a model that should be looked at in terms of

this legislation for the governance of a college of the social work profession.

Ms. Wowchuk: Thank you very much for those comments.

Mr. Simms: Thank you.

Mr. Chairperson: Any further questions of the presenter?

Seeing none. Thank you very much, Mr. Simms, for your presentation.

The next presenter we have on our list is Michael Hart, Aboriginal Social Workers' Society in Manitoba.

Good evening, Mr. Hart. Welcome. You have a written presentation, I see. Just give us a few moments, and we'll distribute it to the committee members, and I'll give you the signal to proceed.

Please proceed, Mr. Hart.

Mr. Michael Hart (Aboriginal Social Workers' Society in Manitoba): Mr. Chairperson, Ms. Vice-Chairperson and committee members, I'm Michael Hart, Michael Anthony Hart. *Cree spoken. Translation unavailable.*

I'm from Fisher River. I'm a citizen of Fisher River Cree Nation and I reside here in Winnipeg. I've worked in social work for the past 20 years in a variety of fields, including child welfare, addictions, family therapy and education. I hold a Bachelor's degree in social work, a Master's degree in social work and a Ph.D. in social work. So I come here with some understanding about what we're going forward with. I'd like to thank you for an opportunity to speak.

We appreciate the opportunity at this present time, especially considering the past practices recently of what is considered as consultation by some people has been seen by us as nothing more than a presentation to the—by the MASW-MIRSW, to support the act. It has not been consultation. To say or to think it has been consultation goes to the heart of the matter for us as Aboriginal peoples.

The Aboriginal Social Workers' Society in Manitoba is made up of Aboriginal people who have demonstrated our commitment to helping ourselves and others achieve wellness. It's a society comprised of individuals who have developed their helping abilities through various processes, including

education, mentorship and on-the-job training. Our vision is one where our society is an inspirational self-sustaining organization determining and supporting our own cultural ways of conduct and practice in the helping professions.

As Aboriginal people, we have our own understandings, including how to help one another, which are based upon our histories, our world views, our practices, our life experiences and our standards. As Aboriginal peoples, we consider ourselves to be self-determining. We remain committed to our aspirations of taking the idea of "by Aboriginal people, for Aboriginal peoples, with Aboriginal peoples" into social work.

To address our aspirations as Aboriginal people in relation to Bill 9, The Social Work Profession Act, requires acknowledgment that the act is an exercise— is about the exercise of power and control over social workers by social workers. In the present context of Manitoba generally, where Aboriginal people are a minority of the population but often disproportionately are represented as recipients of social services, and of social workers in Manitoba specifically, it could be easily seen that this act translates to the exercise of power and control by non-Aboriginal social workers over Aboriginal social workers. There are several key areas in the bill which demonstrates this very point. These including the following 10 areas.

In regards to the composition of the board, there's no expectation of Aboriginal people's representation on the board. Without such required representation, the perspectives, understandings, practices, values and beliefs of Aboriginal peoples are left to others, who are most unlikely to have a firm grasp on these matters. We would be—we would be again regulated to the periphery and forced to address additional barriers to implementing culturally relevant practices and standards.

In regards to the registrar, there are no certainties that the registrar is to hold knowledge and understanding of Aboriginal peoples, perspectives, practices and standards. A person acting as a registrar without knowledge and understanding of Aboriginal peoples and perspectives is very unlikely to know how to move forward on these matters in ways that are reflective of Aboriginal people's realities and therefore supportive—and therefore supportive to Aboriginal social workers.

In regards to registrations, points 10 and 11: without a thorough understanding of Aboriginal people's perspectives, knowledge and practices, people functioning in a completely appropriate manner in Aboriginal community may not be supported as a social worker because of a lack of understanding by the college and/or the registrar.

Appeals to the board: unless people hearing the appeals are thoroughly based in Aboriginal cultures, knowledges, practices, experiences and standards, there's a hidden barrier for Aboriginal applicants, that is, the board's lack of understanding of Aboriginal peoples and our experiences and perspectives.

* (20:20)

In regards to the composition of the complaints committee and inquiry committee, sections 27(1), 41(1), 41(2), these committees are made up of two or more members of the college and one or more public representatives, with one-third being public representative. Anecdotally, the understanding by social workers of Aboriginal peoples and our perspectives is quite limited. The public's understanding is most likely even more limited. This'll place an unfair circumstance on Aboriginal people involved in these processes, since the matters will be looked at and judged through unfamiliar lenses.

In regards to the by-laws, 61(1), particularly (n), (o) and (p). In these cases, 61(1)(n) addresses registrations, 61(1)(o) addresses classes of membership, and 61(1)(p) addresses certificates of practices. By-laws in these areas are likely to lead to the exclusion of Aboriginal peoples' perspectives, understandings, practices and/or standards, if written by groups of people who are not based in Aboriginal communities, cultures and perspectives.

In regards to the code of ethics, section 62. In a similar fashion as the by-laws, without a majority voice at a general meeting, Aboriginal people cannot be certain that the code of ethics that is adopted will reflect and support Aboriginal perspectives, values, beliefs, practices and standards.

In regards to the practice auditors, 63 and 64. The practice—if the practice auditor is not familiar with Aboriginal practices, additional burden is placed on Aboriginal members to prove we are meeting the requirement as defined by non-Aboriginal peoples. Further, Aboriginal social

workers are likely to be in positions where they have to deny their culturally appropriate practices and standards since they are not likely to be recognized by the college's practice auditors.

In regards to the majority of members of the college, such as 61(3). There are circumstances where a majority of the members of the college would vote on matters such as amending or repealing by-laws. Aboriginal members of the college would comprise a minority of the members and are likely to remain a minority for some time to come. As such, the Aboriginal social work community cannot be certain that such manners will reflect Aboriginal aspirations, perspectives and practices.

In regards to duty of members to report. In light of the limited knowledge that the general social work practice has about Aboriginal perspectives, knowledge, values, beliefs and practices, it would be reasonable to suggest that Aboriginal social workers would be further pressured to not work from our own cultural base and standards. Alternatively, if Aboriginal social workers are to work from a culturally based position, they are more likely to be reported by their peers because they're reflecting a different experience and understanding than the persons reporting.

In light of the reality that the social work profession centres itself on serving populations facing social injustices, it would be a travesty that the profession would be guided by an act that would enshrine such a disregard to social justice and the well-being of one of the most disadvantaged populations in Manitoba, namely Aboriginal peoples. It is for this disregard of the well-being of Aboriginal peoples, whether as social workers or recipients of social services, that we, the Aboriginal Social Workers' Society in Manitoba, oppose the implementation of Bill 9.

We recognize that we are a minority voice in relation to all social workers in Manitoba, and we know what we stand for is not necessarily what the majority of people in Manitoba want or, more specifically, what the majority of social workers in Manitoba want. Therefore, we do have several recommendations that consider this circumstance.

These recommendations are: One, that any vote on Bill 9 be suspended until an appropriate review of Bill 9 take place publicly in communities throughout Manitoba. This review should reach a much larger crowd than what is represented by the membership of the MASW-MIRSW and should include efforts to

reach as large a population of Aboriginal peoples as possible;

That if the concept of a College Of Social Workers is to move forward, then Bill 9 should be amended so that the—so that a parallel college of Aboriginal social workers can be established;

That the legislation mandate that all fees for licensing social workers be divided between the Manitoba College of Social Workers and the Aboriginal social workers' college of Manitoba;

That any act which establishes any professional social work college that oversees the practice of Aboriginal social workers would address the following points:

(a) The composition of the board shall require a certain ratio of board members be Aboriginal peoples recognized by Aboriginal communities;

that—(b) That there be an Aboriginal registrar addressing matters pertinent to Aboriginal peoples;

(c) Clear registration guidelines shall be divided and overseen by Aboriginal peoples within the college, as well as the opportunity for applications to be reviewed by Aboriginal person, persons for approval and renewal;

(d) Any appeals by Aboriginal applicants shall be heard by Aboriginal people who reside on the board;

(e) Complaints with, by and/or about Aboriginal peoples shall be heard by Aboriginal people. Thus, in such circumstances, the committee shall be composed of Aboriginal people;

(f) By-laws should be reviewed by Aboriginal members of the college, either as a whole college and/or by a committee, to ensure that matters they determine to be pertinent are addressed appropriately and openly;

(g) There should be clear direction for the college to take action to reflect Aboriginal perspectives, values, beliefs and practices in the code of ethics adopted. This shall include a requirement that a code adopted should require the support of a majority of the Aboriginal member present at the general meeting;

(h) Aboriginal members shall be required to be reviewed by Aboriginal practice auditors;

(i) Matters affecting Aboriginal members and/or Aboriginal peoples shall require an acceptance by a

majority of Aboriginal members of the college either at a general meeting or through some other means determined by Aboriginal members.

So, in summary, we would like to reiterate that the establishment of any college of social work is an exercise in the distribution of power and control over social workers and, as Aboriginal people, we see ourselves as self-determining. We know that our people are the best people to determine the direction for ourselves and for creating a stronger sense of well-being in our families, communities and nations.

We do not see Bill 9 supporting our vision for ourselves as self-determining peoples. As such, we cannot support the bill. If it is to go forward it must go forward in a way that clearly and overtly supports the self determine of-self-determination of Aboriginal peoples. Thank you.

Mr. Chairperson: Thank you very much for your presentation, Mr. Hart. Questions of the presenter? *[interjection]*

Order, please. Order, please. I must advise members of the audience there is to be no public participation during the presentation and also in the question and answer portion of our meetings this evening. So I please ask you to refrain from any applause or any other actions.

Mr. Derkach. *[interjection]* Okay, Mrs. Mitchelson.

Mrs. Mitchelson: Mr. Hart, thank you very much for your presentation, well thought out and very articulate. I think very self-explanatory. You've been very clear in your direction of what you would like to see happen and so for that I thank you very much, and I was looking forward to the recommendations that your organization would make, and, as I said, they've spelled it very clearly for us to consider. Thank you.

Mr. Chairperson: Mr. Hart, did you wish to respond, sir?

Mr. Hart: Yes. I appreciate your comments. It's not me; it's our society. I happen to be the presenter.

Mr. Leonard Derkach (Russell): Thank you very much for that presentation, Mr. Hart.

This bill has been before the House for some time now and during that period since it was introduced have you or your organization had the opportunity to address your issues with the minister

and with government because, from your presentation here tonight, I gather you have not been adequately consulted and the bill is deficient in many ways, but I'm wondering what involvement you have had and your organization has had with the government in addressing the issues that you address here tonight?

Mr. Hart: In terms of developing the act or the bill, Bill 9, we have not had any involvement in the development of Bill 9.

Mr. Derkach: Have you made any attempt to contact the minister after you were made aware of the bill? Did your organization make an attempt to contact the minister or the government to ensure that your views would be considered in the development of the bill?

Mr. Hart: I'm hearing two things. One is that, after the bill is developed, and then you're saying in the development of the bill. So maybe if you could rephrase it again.

Mr. Derkach: Well, through the course that the bill comes into force, there are amendments that could be brought forward either by the government or by individuals, before the bill reaches this stage for example, or at least the government could signal amendments that it will be bringing forward.

Did you have an opportunity to make your views known to the minister or to the government prior to this stage?

Mr. Hart: Today we're able to present our views, not in this detail by no means.

Mr. Derkach: And I appreciate the fact that you've come forward at this stage, but as you know, this session is three weeks long and then it'll adjourn, and I think there's an expectation by the government that this bill will pass.

* (20:30)

I see a huge shortcoming in the government addressing your issues in this bill, and, yet, they're very important in terms of child welfare, especially for Aboriginal people. And I see a gap here where you've come to present before the committee here tonight. Surely in the process of the development of this bill, somebody from your organization had to be talking to government. And was that simply ignored, rejected or what was the status of that?

Mr. Hart: The closest that we've come to talking with government was last year in terms of—I can't recall the individual person's name. I had reached out to Minister Robinson to express our views. We didn't meet with Minister Robinson, we talked to one of his staff.

Later on I had forward a brief to Minister Mackintosh, who, I was understood, was the person back at that time, who was going to address this bill. Never heard anything again. So I've never talked to any government member other than the staff member of, I believe, there's an Aboriginal committee. So there's one person on that committee that we talked to. Sorry, there was two people present at that time.

Mr. Derkach: In terms of process, would your social work organization and the Aboriginal people support a hoist motion for this bill until such time that the minister, whoever the minister will be after the leadership, will be able, then, to consult with your people to ensure that the bill adequately addresses the issues that you've raised, whether they're all included or some of them. But at least you will have some satisfaction that, indeed, your voice will be heard. Would your organization support a hoist motion in third reading so that this can be done?

Mr. Hart: If the intent was that we be able to consult further, not just with the Aboriginal Social Workers' Society of Manitoba, but with Aboriginal peoples in Manitoba, yes, we'd be supportive of that.

Mr. Lamoureux: I want to just follow up a bit with what Mr. Derkach is saying, Mr. Hart.

Your organization has been around, I take it, for a while and the question I would have is that, at what point in time were you even aware of any sort of movement in this direction, or was there ever a desire on your part to see movement in this direction?

Mr. Hart: The first time we became aware of such movement—and you're going to have to, my memory goes with my hair, it leaves me—would be, I think it's in the early 90's, when they were trying to bring a similar issue forward and at that time I became aware of it. Since that time, part of the thrust about the establishment of the Aboriginal Social Workers' Society of Manitoba was to be prepared for this very event that we're facing now.

Mr. Lamoureux: There are a number of other Aboriginal organizations. To the very best of your knowledge, do you know if any of them, whether it's

the MKO or any other organization in Winnipeg with Aboriginal background or agendas, if they would have been contacted in any fashion, or would the government tell us in the future that, yeah, we've talked to such and such group. Like, are you aware of any consultation?

Mr. Hart: I can't speak on the government. What I can speak upon is my limited understanding of the MSW, and RSW who have gone out to give presentations to various organizations. Now, as I said, that's not consultation.

Mr. Lamoureux: Has there been any dialogue that you know, even with your own organization and MKO or anything of that nature in regards to this bill. Like, do we know what, for example, Chief Evans would have to say about something like this?

Mr. Hart: It would be inappropriate for me to speak on behalf of any of the leaderships, whether it's MKIO or AMC or the Southern Chiefs Organization. What I can say is that we have not been consulted.

Ms. Wowchuk: Thank you Mr. Hart, both for your presentation this evening and also for the discussion that we had earlier this afternoon to share your thoughts. I just—I have one question that I want to ask you. As this—this is legislation is proposing a single college, we have a single college, if we have a single college, what can that college learn from, about traditional Aboriginal approaches and would you be willing to work with the college to ensure that Aboriginal approaches are properly considered?

Mr. Hart: It's been our experiences Aboriginal peoples, generally speaking, to work with peoples. We have attempted to do that. For example, we have invited the MSW, MIRSW to present to community presentation, which they did. They very clearly presented their support the bill. So, yes, our experience is that we would consult and work with.

Within a college, you have to be—we have to be more specific, because the tendency has been that Aboriginal peoples would have a voice that's, for lack of better terms, token and put to aside. If you truly want an Aboriginal voice to be consistently present and influential in creating positive change, because Aboriginal peoples have much to contribute to all citizens of this province, then it has to be in a manner where there is a distribution of power that ensures that that will happen.

Mr. Chairperson: Thank you very much for your presentation and answers to the questions, Mr. Hart.

The next presenter I have on the list is Karyn Delichte. I hope I've pronounced that last name correctly. Good evening.

Ms. Karyn Delichte (Private Citizen): Good evening.

Mr. Chairperson: Did I pronounce your name correctly?

Ms. Delichte: It's actually Delichte.

Mr. Chairperson: Delichte. Okay. Do you have a written presentation?

Ms. Delichte: I do, but it's my only one. May I refer to it and then leave it for copying?

Mr. Chairperson: Yes, thank you. Please proceed when you're ready.

Ms. Delichte: Thank you. Well, it's clear from some of the speakers tonight that there is definitely quality, dedication and empowering social workers out there. What I think I can bring is a slightly different perspective.

Now I've had a—as a general citizen, I've had a tremendous misfortune of dealing with a negligent, deceitful, incompetent and biased registered social worker. As part of a parenting assessment for family court, I had wrongly entrusted the profession of social work, but also the registered social worker title that went with her name, and it was, I thought, was a mark of professional qualifications, knowledge and quality of service. In these situations, though, not limited to family court matters, certainly, registered social workers have the power and authority to permanently alter or destroy lives.

This is precisely why I believe that protections, safeguards and ethical standards should be in place. But these cannot exist only in superficial documents and industry claims. These standards need to be appropriate, adequate and also reinforced by laws to ensure that the public can receive the highest quality standard of care. Also, when this standard is not met, regardless of intent by the individual social worker, a review process that is honest, thorough and transparent must be in place to ensure that the individual social worker, and their governing body, can withstand scrutiny and question.

At the present time, RSW carries for me two meanings: to the general public and to me, personally, it represents a false authority and a

professionalism that is simply and only an illusion. In my situation that was definitely the case. To the individual member of the social work association, MASW-MIRSW, it can be a system of protection because colleagues on the complaints committee may be guided by a concern for a fellow social worker, and perhaps their own desire to protect their ability to say and do what they want, without ever having to answer for it.

I was a victim of domestic violence. I have been strangled, hit, grabbed, restrained, sat on, financially controlled, stalked, threatened, terrified and then tormented by the family justice system that threatens to take away my children and throw me in jail.

I have lost the freedom, liberty, dignity and peace that I once knew. I have lost personal and financial resources because of a fraudulent report by a registered social worker. I have been further violated by the family court process itself, and negative, harmful stereotypes that extend beyond what we've heard about racial discrimination, but also gender discrimination.

All of these concepts seem to be what the profession of social work strives to oppose, or at least repeatedly claims to oppose through their core values, code of ethics and standards of practice. But there is a distinct difference between theory and practice that I believe we all need to look at and discuss.

I was not protected, and I did not have the ability to obtain answers for the way I was treated. I believe the responsibility here rests in closing the gaps between theory and practice, and preventing the cover up of negligent practitioners when relying—or through the reliance of evasive techniques, deferrals to unrelated authorities and plays on words that mean complaints can be swept under the rug.

* (20:40)

I would suggest that you begin first by understanding why this act is necessary. I'm sure you have had many discussions, but we need to recognize that there can be extreme good in the field, but also extreme incompetence, negligence and discrimination, and the review process that is currently in place does nothing to protect victims of social work malpractice.

In my experience with my case, I went to MASW and I received the appearance of what seemed to be an interest in my case and in receiving

a written complaint. I was also advised that the most extreme outcome would be the revocation of the social worker's membership. It was openly admitted that the social worker would still be able to practise outside of MASW-MIRSW and would possibly do this to others.

Where, then, is the integrity or incentive to discipline colleagues if the only result is that your association loses a member and the associated membership fee? Worth noting, these members can still practise under the current by-laws and, I believe, guidelines of MASW or CASW.

I prepared a detailed, evidence-supported complaint and provided it to MASW. The care that I thought I had a right to is ultimately not what I received. I gave examples in detailed form, again supported by evidence, and I can only provide you with a snapshot. This written report will indicate some specific examples, but I was subjected to deceit, fraudulent misrepresentation, unequal representation, defamation of character and incompetent, biased and negligent social work practice, and this is using the language within their own literature.

All of these are emphasized through these documents that I was provided through MASW in their considered negligence, conduct unbecoming and forms of malpractice when not followed. These documents were no guarantee that I would be treated fairly or that my complaint, with evidence, would be taken seriously.

In my formal complaint, I addressed, in writing, a total of 250 pages, with 1,100-pages plus of supporting documentation and video evidence. The claim was made that the social worker prepared a more extensive report than originally anticipated in order to thoroughly address the many issues and allegations raised during the assessment. My evidence showed otherwise.

In fact, the social worker's report carries a lot of weight and a false authority through the judicial system and the family court system. The assumptions are made, and they are false, that all social workers are honest, professional and competent by virtue of the RSW on their business card.

I subsequently met with MASW and I was told that my complaint was too large, that I had to cut it down. I had to give them less than 10 percent of what it was in original form, and I was given two options: I could cut it down and dilute it and hope to

get some sort of a resolution, or let it stand in its original form, which, I was told, could take years to get through with the turnover and the volunteer nature of their complaints committee.

I did not have—I had two choices; neither one was appropriate to me. Soon after I complied and I gave a diluted, watered-down version. I was never told what the social worker responded to, if my issues, allegations and evidence ever made it to her and what a decision was based on. The complaints committee determined that my complaint had no merit; yet, not one single piece of evidence was responded to. They hid behind the vague, self-serving language of their by-laws.

I asked that I be entitled to a copy of the social worker's response to my complaint. It was highlighted, then, for me in part 3, item 14 of the social worker's addendum to their investigation of complaints. A copy of the response may be sent to the complainant—not must be sent—not should be sent. So—maybe, but it wasn't, and I was told that I would not be receiving a copy of that.

I was advised by MASW that they reviewed relevant materials; yet, there was no accounting of what they deemed to be relevant. The claim—sorry, they claimed to have reviewed the report itself, which was meaningless, unless reviewed parallel to the evidence of fraudulent misrepresentation, biased deceit, and so on.

The personal and financial cost of fraudulent social work practice is incredible. The damage to financial situation, poverty imposed upon families, loss of the home—these are all real factors that people have to deal with.

Protection for the public, I think, lies at present in the fact that self-governing role of MASW is grossly inadequate and supports an abuse of power and authority. The ambiguities and the language of the act must take away any ability of MASW-MIRSW or its individual members to conceal their actions and their conduct, so that the language that says they may provide this information can be tightened.

They must provide this information, and I believe that we should ensure that registered social workers have little or no authority to participate in the complaints review process, as there may be a danger of them imposing limitations on professional practice that may restrict their own freedom or

capacity to stray from professional standards and ethics.

There has been, in my experience, a complete and pervasive lack of accountability, responsibility, integrity, and most importantly, transparency, and if MASW complaints committee had acted in an ethical manner, certainly the logical question would be: Why are they hiding behind the language in their own by-laws and refusing to provide me with the information I requested? More importantly, what would be revealed if they no longer had the power to keep these secrets, and to what extent do these secrets reveal their self-protective, misleading complaints process? Certainly, I will never know, and most definitely, it did not centre on protection of the public good.

But others, I believe, can benefit from my experiences, and that's why I am here to share a moving forward. This act must immediately remove the ability and capacity for abuse of power and authority, and highlight self-determination and dignity for those that social workers are working with, but also to insist that they account for their professional actions, decisions and opinions, and that there are serious ramifications when they violate the standards of their chosen profession, especially when they cause harm to the public, and individual citizens.

The act must do all it can to guarantee an independent, non-biased process of reviewing complaints that legitimately protects the public from deceit and fraudulent misrepresentation within the field—rare or pervasive. A Manitoba College of Social Workers, as a self-governing body, would hold the same power as MASW, to overlook and conceal misconduct of colleagues. I would urge you to remove the ability to abuse power and authority from the hands of those involved.

The theoretical provision of a licensing and disciplinary body is no guarantee that there will be a better quality of care and protection of public interest. These documents appear to be in place now, only are taking the form, in the last two years, in the form of The Social Work Profession Act. The documents themselves that I obtained, The Standard of Practice Code of Conduct and Values, did not seem to protect me. The onus, however, should not be and cannot be on the private citizen to stand up to this negligence, or to finance the process. That is impossible.

My involvement has led to financial ruin, personal sacrifice and extreme family damage. That is my experience with a registered social worker. The very people who utilize services of registered social workers are often financially incapable of fighting back legally, and like me, they are unaware of a two-year window, in which they could sue for malpractice. But who can afford this litigation?

Only the act can restrict the ability of a social worker to cause harm, and to punish accordingly, as a way of preventing RSWs from being able to do this to more unsuspecting and trusting clients. All of us assume, wrongly, of course, that we have the rights and protections, or that evidence will be addressed fairly.

I request that the act remove any and all loopholes that see a continuation of this conduct, and I thank you for your attention, and for affording me the opportunity to address the importance of alternative perspectives, before this act becomes law. And I certainly welcome your questions.

Mr. Chairperson: Thank you, Ms. Delichte, for your presentation this evening.

Questions of the presenter?

Mrs. Mitchelson: Yes, thanks very much, for that. It was a comprehensive, sort of list of issues that you've had to deal with, and my condolences to you for the pain that you've been through.

* (20:50)

You mentioned a lot of things, and I think a tightening up of the act certainly may require us looking through the act pretty significantly to see where those loopholes are, and I would probably need a copy of *Hansard*, unless you have a written copy that you could share with us. If we could have copies made that we could receive tonight of your presentation, that might be very helpful in helping us to deal with all of the issues that you've raised and see if there aren't some amendments that could be made to tighten the legislation. Thank you.

Mr. Chairperson: Ms. Delichte, do you wish to comment?

Ms. Delichte: No, thank you very much for the opportunity.

Mr. Chairperson: Other questions of the presenter?

Ms. Wowchuk: Thank you, Ms. Delichte, for sharing. I know that it's not easy to go through a

situation like that—to shared a situation like that. There's a couple of comments that you made about not being able to get a written report, and I want to know if you're aware that in this new act, the complaints committee must give the member and the complainant a written notice, setting out its decision, and the reasons for its decision. So that is one of the issues that is addressed in this act then, and the other one is that the college has the ability to do an audit conduct of the social workers that are registered with the college.

I wondered if you were aware of those two, and that would be part of the reason for your supporting this bill.

Ms. Delichte: Yes, definitely, and I believe that your first point puts it—puts this act on par with other helping professions as well, that the complainant is provided with a copy of the response, and, in my case, I explicitly asked for the documentation and was told that I would not be entitled to that. So that is an excellent provision that I think will go a long way to protecting public interest. And I'm sorry, I forgot your second point.

Ms. Wowchuk: It was about the—has the ability to do an audit on conduct.

Ms. Delichte: Yes, I believe some sort of appeals process or audit would resolve some of the issues, because certainly, I would have had the legal right to sue for malpractice. However, that's just not feasible, and some sort of audit or a process where cases such as mine could go forward and investigate would, I think, do a lot to protecting public good.

Mr. Derkach: Question. How long ago did this situation occur with you? Was that just recently, or was that some time ago?

Ms. Delichte: This has been since 2005, and I'm still dealing with the ramifications of the report that went in, and it has still not been challenged in family court. And, yet, I was also advised by MASW that they would not get involved because the court has found this to be credible. Yet it hasn't, so it was just deferral after deferral, and I just was looking for an opportunity to be able to dispel the lies that were contained in the report, both by the other party, and by the social worker.

Mr. Chairperson: Any further questions of the presenter? Seeing none, thank you, Ms. Delichte, for your presentation this evening.

And for the information of committee members, the copies of the presentation will be distributed in a few moments.

The next presenter I have on the list is Ken Mackenzie, private citizen. Ken Mackenzie? Ken Mackenzie. Seeing that Ken Mackenzie is not here, the name will be dropped to the bottom of the list.

The next presenter we have is Sherrill Hershberg. Sherrill Hershberg.

Good evening, ma'am. Welcome.

Do you have a written presentation?

Ms. Sherrill Hershberg (Private Citizen): Yes, I do.

Mr. Chairperson: Just give us a few moments, and we'll distribute it and then I'll give you the signal to proceed.

Ms. Hershberg: Thank you.

Mr. Chairperson: Please proceed, Ms. Hershberg.

Ms. Hershberg: Thank you. Mr. Chairperson, Ms. Vice-Chairperson and committee members. My name is Sherrill Hershberg, and I think I've beaten the number of years of practice of everybody who's presented, since I am in my 38th year of practice in the social work profession. I hold an MSW degree and I am a registered social worker.

I represent a group of experienced practising social workers, all who've—all of whom hold MSW and RSW designations and are currently in practice. On behalf of my colleagues, I wish to thank the committee of Social and Economic Development for giving us the opportunity to speak to Bill 9.

The varieties of practice in which we have engaged in actually encompass a wide sphere of professional social work in the community, and several of us have been educators. I, myself, have been a faculty liaison in the field of aging with the Faculty of Social Work, and I have also been a field instructor in a wide variety of settings in the community.

All of us—all of my colleagues currently and in the past have a very deep commitment to standards of education and practice as they relate to our profession. It is to this point I will speak this evening.

The primary responsibility of all professionals, including social workers, is to act in the best interest

of their clients. Social work has a defined body of knowledge, skills and professional practice training that results in a client's identified concerns being understood in the context within which they occur. Thus, social work as a profession must ensure that social workers meet stringent educational qualifications and national, not provincial, standards of practice. In other words, of course, provincial, but as that is reflected in national standards of practice, we'll have our own standards as well.

We are in full support of the proposed legislation to establish the Manitoba College of Social Workers. However, the proposed social work act as currently written fails to fully address the critical qualifications and practice standards of the profession. It is our contention that the following sections of the act be amended in order to ensure that appropriate standards of education and practice are prerequisites for an individual's registration to the social work college, and then are maintained accordingly.

Our concerns focus on the lack of professional standards required for registration, indicated by the lack of focus—sorry, indicated by the lack of clarity and general inadequacy of part 4, registration as a social worker, sections 10(2), (3), and 11(1), which address the qualifications of a social worker under the proposed act, and in addition section 6, which lacks in appropriate designation for members sitting on the board of the college.

We believe that the legislation should include specifically that every individual wanting to use the designation social worker should have or be required to obtain, at minimum, an undergraduate degree from an accredited faculty of social work. This must include a grandparent option for practicing workers who have been in the field. The latter group should be given a set amount of time to obtain the specified degree or, as in some other provinces, be required to use a different designation. We note that most other regulated professions require this, in part to ensure clarity to the public when they seek professional assistance. A hospital volunteer or worker cannot use the designations nurse or physician. This also applies to teachers and psychologists. Our clients and the general public should have no less assurance that social workers are graduates of accredited colleges and have received the best education to best serve our clients.

* (21:00)

Part 3.6(1), board composition, does not mandate positions for University of Manitoba

registered social worker educators or for registered social work practitioners. Since the university has a well-established accredited program of social work education and has the highest number of social work students in Manitoba, we believe that these university educators should have a mandated position on the board in order to help ensure national standards of education as are laid out by CASWE, the Canadian association of social work educators. Similarly, mandated board positions for registered social workers must be included in the mandated board composition, as it is these professionals who are in the field, on the front line, and are able to address current practice issues and concerns as they arise with client groups.

At least two positions should be reserved for First Nations registered social workers, and it may be important to identify other minorities groups' registered social workers for inclusion to the legislated board composition requirements. In addition, with regard to student representation on the board, a Bachelor of social degree—social work degree should be the minimum requirement for board eligibility. Manitobans must be inclusive of those working in the field of social work who desire to register with the proposed college but who may not meet all educational requirements. We are aware that in other jurisdictions methods have been identified which address this issue. However, it is incumbent upon us that we are not only inclusive, but also ensure that educational and practice requirements for membership in the proposed Manitoba College of Social Workers meet national standards with regard to the social work accreditation body and, minimally, the standards of practice of the Canadian Association of Social Workers. Thank you.

Mr. Chairperson: Thank you very much, Ms. Hershberg, for your presentation this evening.

Questions of the presenter?

Mrs. Mitchelson: Thank you very much, Ms. Hershberg, for your presentation, and we've heard varying points of view on the legislation. You are certainly supportive of regulatory body to register social workers, and it sounds like you would be supportive of some amendments that would clarify the educational requirements—

Ms. Hershberg: And practice standards as well.

Mrs. Mitchelson: Thank you for that, for that clarification. And you would also support a mandated role and responsibility for the Faculty of

Social Work as the accredited body in Manitoba to be part of the board composition?

Ms. Hershberg: I think it's important, and with reference to the very difficult presentation that we just heard. I think that the former speaker really, clearly addressed the issue of standards of practice that are Canadian, that are used by most other provinces in Canada, if not all, and that we should be part of that body which looks to standards in addition to our own provincial ones, but that are inclusive of national, of the national standards of social work.

There is a body of social workers that are comprehensively—they have developed sets of guidelines that are comprehensive and in those—in that case, I don't believe we need to reinvent the wheel. If we had been able to look outside of the province to standards across Canada, I would hope that some of the issues that the former presenter brought forward tonight could have been addressed in a much more professional and constructive way by our profession.

Mr. Chairperson: Further questions of the presenter?

Ms. Wowchuk: I would just like to take this opportunity to thank you for your thoughts and your ideas on how this might be moved along, and I thank you.

Mr. Chairperson: Thank you, Ms. Hershberg, for your presentation this evening.

Ms. Hershberg: Thank you.

Mr. Chairperson: Next presenter we have on the list is Chris Enns, private citizen. Chris Enns?

Good evening, sir. Welcome. Do you have a written presentation?

Mr. Chris Enns (Private Citizen): I do. Yes, I do.

Mr. Chairperson: Give us a few moments to distribute; then I'll give you the signal to proceed.

Please proceed, Mr. Enns.

Mr. Enns: Thank you, Mr. Chairperson, for this opportunity to provide comments regarding Bill 9, The Social Work Profession Act.

I graduated from the University of Manitoba with a Bachelor's of social work and a Master's in social work, and I've been a social worker in the province of Manitoba for 14 years now, providing direct services to clients and their families. I have

worked in long-term care, in chronic care, and I currently work in the mental health field and in private practice. From the perspective of my experience as a social worker, I wish to express my full support for Bill 9 and the development of a College of Social Workers.

As you know, there currently is no regulation regarding the use of the title social worker within Manitoba, and, as such, people use this title, regardless of their qualifications. And I'm concerned that without the legislation and subsequent mandatory registration of all social workers in Manitoba that there is little assurance to the public of social work competency in general, and no means of recourse should a client be subject to improprieties. And I would like to give several examples from my own experience in long-term care, mental health and in private practice to indicate what I feel is the importance of this legislation.

In long-term care, social workers are often regarded as non-professionals. However, most of the social workers in long-term care have more education than most other professions they work with on the interdisciplinary teams. And I believe social workers are taken advantage of because of their unregulated status, and they are often treated as nursing assistants, carrying out the wishes of the nurses and other professions while abandoning the services that they could and should provide to clients. I believe both client and social worker would benefit from the mandatory legislation and subsequent support from the college to ensure appropriate interventions.

In mental health, social workers are asked to participate more and more, and they provide crisis intervention, case management, individual psychotherapy, couples therapy, family intervention. Social workers do not receive sufficient training from institutions in order to take the positions offered within the mental health system. They must get the training elsewhere. I believe mandatory regulation and the scrutiny of a college would help narrow the gap between the skills that jobs within mental health demand and the training offered at the institutional level, thus ensuring the standards of practice in mental health.

In private practice, there currently is no regulation that will ensure the public that social workers who engage in counselling, psychotherapy are competent to practise, sufficiently insured, adhere to appropriate recordkeeping, and/or adhere

to the legislated principles of confidentiality. Legislation provides a framework for which a college can develop appropriate practice standards and guidelines and complaint processes.

Social workers have had a long and significant history of involvement in this province from the larger society level to the individual level. The regulation of social work profession is well overdue as evidenced by the presence of legislation in other provinces in Canada. The mandatory regulation of social workers and development of a college of social work will help ensure standards for education, competency and ethical practice to a diverse profession for the benefit of all Manitobans. As well, the establishment of a college will provide the opportunity for the profession of social work to develop and grow within Manitoba.

* (21:10)

And I'm wondering if I could request a comment on the requirements for social work, and that isn't part of my written submission. Would that be appropriate to ask? *[interjection]* Okay.

I just wanted to reiterate that the modernization of this legislation provides for several possible categories for an application for membership, and these are consistent with most social work jurisdictions across Canada. In addition to those candidates who apply with full social work academic credentials, the agreement on international trade and mobility agreements require that there be a mechanism for evaluation and consideration of alternative credentials, so that through the regulations, through the regulations that the college would establish after legislation, the college would develop criteria and methods that will evaluate what is referred to as substantial equivalency in credentials.

The criteria will be based on current best practices in North America and will also have a means for evaluating international credentials. This is consistent with most other Canadian social work jurisdictions that operate with a modernization of legislation. And, in general, any applicant who does not possess a social work degree from an accredited academic program will have to demonstrate to a registrar that the credentials are sufficient to meet the substantial equivalency test. If they are unable to do so, then the membership will either be denied or they will be provided with a certificate subject to the conditions and restrictions.

So members of the standing committee and members of the public who are in attendance may be assured that the Manitoba College of Social Workers will be applying, in a rigorous standard, eligibility for membership to fulfil our mandate for protection of the public interest and the advancement of interests of the profession. And, unfortunately, I'm speaking as a board member there, so I, I'm including the "we" here.

I really want to thank you for the opportunity to express my views in front of the standing committee here tonight. Thank you.

Mr. Chairperson: Thank you very much for your presentation, Mr. Enns. Questions of the presenter?

Mrs. Mitchelson: Thank you, Mr. Enns, for your presentation. Then you would not be opposed to an amendment that would include a mandated role for someone from the Faculty of Social Work to be—

Floor Comment: Definitely.

Mr. Chairperson: Mr. Enns.

Mr. Enns: It would be welcome that the faculty would participate on the board.

Floor Comment: Thank you.

Mr. Lamoureux: What about any sort of Aboriginal representation on the board, having some sort of mandated-in-legislation percentage of the board being of Aboriginal background?

Mr. Enns: I don't think there would be any opposition to that, and I believe that the way the legislation is written, or at least my understanding is, is that it provides for the flexibility to establish policies and guidelines with the aid of the board who could be part Aboriginal. That would be very inclusive and flexible and would really address some of the concerns that have been voiced here tonight.

Ms. Wowchuk: Thank you very much for your presentation, Mr. Enns.

Floor Comment: Thank you.

Mr. Chairperson: Thank you very much, Mr. Enns.

Next presenter we have on the list is David Alper, private citizen.

Good evening, sir. Welcome. You have a written presentation?

Mr. David Alper (Private Citizen): Yes, I do.

Mr. Chairperson: Give us a few moments to distribute and then I'll give you the signal.

Please proceed, Mr. Alper.

Mr. Alper: Monsieur le Président, Madame la Vice-présidente, membres du comité permanent, c'est un grand honneur et privilège de pouvoir vous adresser le parole ici ce soir.

Translation

Mr. Chairperson, Madam Vice-Chairperson, members of the standing committee, it is a great honour and a privilege to be able to speak to you this evening.

English

My name is David Alper, and I'm a social worker with 20 years of experience in a variety of community and institution settings, working both in Canada and the U.S. I'm a social worker and a professor of social work at the Collège universitaire de Saint-Boniface, where I teach social policy. I'd like to thank the committee for giving me this opportunity to speak to you tonight on Bill 9.

I completed my graduate studies in social work at the Jane Addams College of Social Work at the University of Illinois in Chicago. Jane Addams is considered one of the modern founders of the profession of social work, and, for her, social work was about working with and empowering marginalized and oppressed communities, challenging injustice and working for social justice. These ideals remain to this day at the very heart of our profession.

While completing my studies in Chicago, I worked full time on the front lines of social services in the ghetto, the African-American ghetto of the west side of Chicago, and where one of my professors most aptly characterized the nature of health and social services as means-tested and mean-spirited programs set up to fail people. These experiences reinforced my conviction that social workers must work to empower oppressed communities and play an important role in speaking up against injustice and for social justice. Whenever I spoke with my many African-American colleagues at work and at school and talked about the situation of oppression of Aboriginal peoples in Canada, they would invariably respond to me, gee, that sounds a lot like our situation here.

I began my remarks tonight with a few words of greeting in French. I was employed for many years at St. Boniface General Hospital where I worked with a large population of older Francophones who very much appreciated the right to be served in their own language and in a culturally appropriate manner. I saw a tremendous need for more trained social workers to meet this need.

Je suis très fier de le dire; I'm very proud to say that the provincial government recognizes this need as well and has worked to help repair one the historical injustices in Manitoba by funding a new French-language Bachelor of Social Work program at the Collège universitaire de Saint-Boniface. Our program, affiliated with the University of Manitoba, is designed to train bilingual social workers to work with the long-established Franco-Manitoban community but also to reach out to marginalized community of Francophone Métis and newcomers, mainly immigrants and refugees from Africa, who now constitute nearly half of our student body.

The reason I am here today is simple: an injury to one is an injury to all. We are all aware of the harm and trauma inflicted on Aboriginal communities by well-intentioned social workers, who, during the so-called '60s Scoop, blinded by their Eurocentric vision, unjustly apprehended hundreds of Aboriginal children and placed them in culturally inappropriate homes, often thousands of kilometres away. Social workers were also involved in the placement of Aboriginal children in residential schools where irreparable harm was done to generations of Aboriginal communities. I believe that our provincial government has taken some significant steps to recognize another long-standing historical injustice and to try and repair some of this harm, most notably by the devolution of child welfare services to the Aboriginal community.

Social work is not an exact science but rather incorporates a wide body of interdisciplinary knowledge from many different worldviews and paradigms. The teaching of social work and social policy incorporates more and more this philosophy by presenting the many perspectives that can explain the reality of historically oppressed and disempowered communities by focussing on systemic and structural forces that perpetuate this oppression. What I mean to say is that social work education emphasizes the need for social workers to address the root causes of oppression in their work: the effects of discrimination, racism, and colonization.

If we have learned anything from our past mistakes, it is that social workers cannot impose their ideals and cannot liberate oppressed communities. Helping communities means working together with and learning from communities, and sometimes it means stepping aside and devolving responsibilities to communities.

* (21:20)

Manitoba has a very vibrant and dynamic Aboriginal community. It also has a very active grass roots community movement. Both are involved in practices that are positively transforming our communities. And while these practices do not rely on a purely Eurocentric orientation, indigenous and community knowledge bases represent legitimate knowledge bases that are receiving increased recognition within academia.

I'm here today to support the demand that a separate Manitoba college of Aboriginal social workers be established that would be responsible to its membership for implementing the legislation, and with adequate funding to support its activities. It is not only the logical thing to do, as the government has already recognized that Aboriginal communities are best suited to administer their own child welfare services, it is also the right thing to do. It would be another step in repairing the harm inflicted by centuries of colonial policies in addressing what Chief Phil Fontaine has called the fundamental injustice of this country.

In the spirit of an inclusiveness, a representative committee of Aboriginal social workers agencies and organizations should also review The Social Work Profession Act prior to its adoption. And I would also like to take this opportunity to support the demand that an annual social justice fund be incorporated into the legislation and the activities of the new Manitoba College of Social Workers. Social justice remains at the heart of the profession's code of ethics and needs to be translated into concrete actions. I believe that this innovative proposal would help ensure that the college avoid the trap of simply defending the professional interests of social workers and ensure that we remain faithful to our mission of pursuing social justice. Thank you very much.

Mr. Chairperson: Thank you very much for your presentation, Mr. Alper.

Questions of the presenter?

Mr. Derkach: Thank you for your presentation, Mr. Alper. I have a question with regard to an issue

that you raise in your presentation, but one that I'm finding a little bit perplexing, and that is earlier this evening, we heard a presentation from Dr. Hart, I believe it was, with regard to a lack of consultation of Aboriginal peoples on this bill. Yet you, in your presentation, make some important notes and comments regarding the steps that have been taken to address social injustices with regard to the Aboriginal people of this province.

And I'd like to know whether or not you support Dr. Hart's presentation with regard to the fact that Aboriginal people should be consulted before this bill is passed, and their ideas and their, I guess, views that he outlined should be taken into consideration before, in fact, this bill becomes law. We take our serious direction from these committees, and I think it's important that people who have worked in the field as you have and are presently working as an instructor, teacher, professor, your views should be considered, and, certainly, I would be interested in knowing how you feel we could address the issues that were addressed earlier.

Mr. Alper: I most certainly support the recommendations made by the association of Aboriginal social workers of Manitoba.

Mr. Derkach: And I thank you for that. And so what you're saying is that you would support having this bill put on hold until such time that those views and those concerns can more adequately be addressed than they have been in the preparation of this legislation.

Mr. Alper: Most definitely.

An Honourable Member: Thank you very much for your presentation.

Hon. Kerri Irvin-Ross (Minister of Healthy Living): Thank you for your presentation.

Mr. Chairperson: Any further questions to the presenter? Seeing none, thank you, Mr. Alper, for your presentation this evening.

Next presenter we have on the list is Darlene MacDonald, Canadian Association of Social Workers. Good evening. Welcome. Do you have a written presentation?

Ms. Darlene MacDonald (Canadian Association of Social Workers): Yes, I do.

Mr. Chairperson: Just give us a moment to distribute and then I'll give you the signal to proceed.

Please proceed, Ms. MacDonald.

Ms. MacDonald: Thank you, Mr. Chairperson and committee members. I'm very pleased to be here today, and I wish to express my appreciation to the members of this committee for the opportunity to provide a presentation regarding Bill 9, The Social Work Profession Act.

My name is Darlene MacDonald, and I am president of the Canadian Association of Social Workers, which represents over 17,000 social workers across Canada through provincial and territorial social work professional associations and regulatory bodies.

The CASW supports excellence in professional regulation of social work practice. In addition to holding social workers accountable for their practice, regulation encourages professional commitment to continuing education as professional associations provide their members with opportunity to improve and update their skills and knowledge.

In Manitoba, registered social workers must participate in continuing education to promote professional development. Without this, their registration cannot be renewed. At the same time, the registered social worker agrees to submit to professional discipline if their practice does not meet the standards of the profession. This offers a considerable improvement in the protection of public interest. Clients will receive greater assurance of competency and conduct. A complaint can be filed with the regulatory college, who will have the authority to investigate, make a determination regarding the allegation and can require remedial action.

I've been a social worker for over 25 years in the field of child welfare, providing direct service to clients and families. I am currently the chief executive officer of Winnipeg Child and Family Services, and wish to express my support for the legislation and the development of the College of Social Workers. I am a registered social worker.

Child protection workers work with the most vulnerable populations in our society—children. Child safety is everyone's responsibility. By implementing The Social Work Profession Act, we are working together to protect and empower children and their caregivers. It is our public responsibility to ensure those professionals are qualified to deliver the services that children need.

The mandate of child welfare agencies is to work with the community to identify children who

are in need of protection and to decide how best to help and protect those children. A fundamental belief is that government interference in family life should be as minimal as possible, except when parental care is below the community standard and places a child at harm. The major guiding principle is always to act in the best interests of the child.

Social workers and child welfare agencies are involved with the planning and delivery of a variety of services for children and families. The social worker's task is to understand a multitude of factors related to the child, the family and the community, and to balance the children's safety and well-being with the rights and needs of a family that may be in need of help. The professional social work judgment involved in these decisions serve children and families well in the great majority of situations, a fact that's often lost when a case decision becomes the object of intense public and legal scrutiny.

The Social Work Profession Act under consideration today will offer significant improvements with regards to the regulation of social worker profession. Currently, there exists no regulation regarding the use of the title social worker, and any person who wishes to use title may do so, regardless of their academic credentials, knowledge, skills or ethics. They may offer service to the public without restriction or accountability, leaving the public open to being misled. The legislation requires that any person using the title of social work must meet minimum standards for education, ethics, standards of practice and continuing professional development. Manitoba has the oldest legislation, and, with the exception of the territories, all other provinces have some form of regulation, some voluntary and some are mandatory. Some provinces have control of title, while others have control of title and practice.

From my perspective, it is imperative that we move forward and establish the College of Social Workers, supported by the strength of sound legislation. This will enable social workers to work together to ensure that high standards for education, competency and ethical practice are consistently applied throughout our profession.

Thank you for the opportunity to express my support, and on behalf of CASW we support the MASW and MIRS in their advocacy activities and their efforts to obtain regulation of the profession. Thank you.

* (21:30)

Mr. Chairperson: Thank you, Ms. MacDonald, for your presentation this evening.

Questions to the presenter?

Mr. Derkach: Thank you very much for your presentation.

I have a question for you and it goes back to Mr. Hart's presentation. And I want to ask what advice you might want to give governments, given your position with regard to the lack of consultation that was expressed by Mr. Hart this evening.

Ms. MacDonald: I guess partly, I was on the board of MASW and started back in 1990 when I do feel that we did do a fair bit of consultation. You know, I do believe that we have to be more inclusive and—but I do believe consultation has happened and has to continue.

Mr. Derkach: So what you're doing is contradicting what Mr. Hart said this evening because he clearly stated, and his presentation says so, that there was a lack of consultation with Aboriginal peoples on this bill, that there was no consultation. Yet you're saying that there was consultation. So I—and given your position I think this is very important in terms of giving us some instruction as to what we should with this bill because there's still time for amendments, there's still time to perhaps put the bill on hold until more adequate consultation has taken place. And, given your position, we would be very interested in knowing what advice you would have for us as a committee and as legislators who are about to move into a very serious area in terms of what we should do with this legislation.

Ms. MacDonald: I think consultation is always necessary. I'm going back to being a member of MASW board where we did do some consultation in a number of different communities and categories. I don't think anything is ever enough. I think that people will always come forward and say that there hasn't been enough consultation. I think that we need to establish this and move forward.

Mr. Lamoureux: I want to pick up what—Mr. Derkach made a very good point in terms of your position, you know, as chief executive office for Winnipeg Child and Family Services. In terms of an option, is it better to have a College of Social Workers that's independent and completely of an Aboriginal background, or would it be better in Manitoba's best, long interest to have one college where there is a legislative guarantee of Aboriginal

representation? Which one would be better in your opinion?

Ms. MacDonald: Certainly, I'd like to see maybe something a little bit different, that it would be established under the same umbrella. They could act independently; there could be one college, but an umbrella of Aboriginal social workers.

Mr. Lamoureux: Then, going back to your title, I guess, Ms. MacDonald, as the Canadian Association of Social Workers, would you have any objection with the legislation making an amendment that would allow for a guarantee of Aboriginal representation on the college?

Ms. MacDonald: I would concur with that, for sure, yes.

Mr. Chairperson: Any further questions of the presenter? Seeing none, thank you, Ms. MacDonald, for your presentation and for your patience.

Next presenter I have on the list is Joy Eidse. I hope I have pronounced that correctly. My apologies if I said something wrong. Do you have a written presentation?

Eidse?

Ms. Joy Eidse (Private Citizen): Eidse.

Mr. Chairperson: Eidse. Okay, thank you. Thank you for the correction.

Give us a moment and we'll distribute your presentation; then I'll give you the signal to proceed.

Please proceed, Ms. Eidse.

Ms. Eidse: Good evening, everyone. My name is Joy Eidse. I'm a fourth-year student at the University of Manitoba's Inner City Social Work campus on Selkirk Avenue. I'd like to share my perspective on this bill that is under review regarding the licensing of social workers. If my speech is not as fluent as I would like it, it is because I have only become aware of this bill in the last few weeks, as of many of my fellow students and, apparently, some of my professors as well.

Bill 9 is a bill which will affect upcoming and current social workers for the rest of our careers, and I am concerned that so little has been communicated to those of us about to embark on practice and, apparently, to those who have been practising for years. The speed at which these proceedings have occurred threatens to undermine any productive,

democratic processes that would serve to enlighten and enrich this process.

To begin with, I would like to request that this bill be delayed until more information regarding its implications can be distributed to those it will impact so that they can have a chance to formulate their response. I believe that if this were to happen, the people of Manitoba would be much better served by the results of a well-informed decision on this matter.

Madam Vice -Chairperson in the Chair

As a student of the inner-city social worker program, the very first course we are all automatically registered for is called Interpersonal Communication Skills. The gist of the course, as the title implies, is learning to listen and communicate effectively in order to come to a consensus on what the client's needs really are and to formulate an agreed-upon plan to address those needs.

From my understanding of the proceedings between the Manitoba Association of Social Workers and other interested parties, including the Aboriginal Social Workers' Society, once the concerns of the other interested parties were heard, the MASW refused to publish them to their members and refused to meet to discuss solutions to those concerns in favour of speeding up the process of licensing.

As a student, I am very concerned that my potential governing body is unable to practise the skills taught in the very first class in social work. I'm concerned that they may be given the power to decide who is equipped to practise as social workers and what skills are necessary, after having demonstrated a lack of the most basic social work skill, interpersonal communication, at the outset of this process.

During the course of my degree, we had an extensive in-class discussions on the role of a social worker, which is distinct from that of a therapist or other human service personnel. A social worker is concerned about people in environment. This means that if we are meeting with an individual concerning any type of life issue—the environment, including family, society systems, policies and laws—needs to be considered in evaluating the needs and solutions for the client.

It is the role of the social worker to advocate on behalf of vulnerable persons within agencies and society to promote changes to systems, policies or laws that may be affecting the ability of individuals or communities to function well in society. Those

systems, policies or laws that are causing barriers to individuals and communities are often constructed with the best of intentions by social workers and politicians, but may be ill-informed or may have unexamined, underlying culturally biased elements. If there is no room for challenging and reworking these type of barriers, then there's no place for social workers in this society.

The dilemma facing social workers who work for the government or any agency is that, when the social worker discovers a policy system or law that their employer has made, that it is causing barriers to the very people they are trying to serve, and I say when because we will—sorry—because we will find those barriers in our agencies and systems simply because we as a society have not reached utopia. Until then, we will have to continue to improve and rework our structures and laws in order to move closer to our goals as a just society.

Fear of repercussions caused by advocating for change within organizations or governments by the employer who gives them their paycheque is a concern to all social workers who strive to live out value No. 2, pursuit of social justice, from the Canadian Association of Social Workers' core social work values and principles. I have heard numerous individuals, both students and practitioners of social work, express fear of repercussions from MASW if they voice their opinion regarding this bill. I myself wonder how I can be sure that I won't experience dire repercussions in the future if I voice any concerns as a social worker that they do not want to hear if they are given the power to revoke licensing. I need to know that my governing body understands the dilemma social workers are placed in on a daily basis by virtue of their essential role in society, and not only respect, but support and encourage that role in every realm of practice by modelling it within their own organization.

At this point, I do not have confidence in the MASW to be that support to me as a professional. If I cannot have that confidence in my governing body, then I need to practise social work and its values outside of Manitoba, and I believe many of my fellow students feel the same.

If social workers are afraid to practise the values of social workers for fear of repercussions from the governing body, then what future is there for them, and, more importantly, what future is there for a community or society who has no room for critical

analysis? I'll answer that for you. It is no longer a democracy.

Please consider the request that funds from annual registrations, if this is to go through, be used, in the very minimum, to support development of a parallel system for Aboriginal social workers and the request to ensure that the MASW, if this bill passes, is held financially accountable to support research, issue organizing and education for social justice.

And I want to reiterate that I would like to request that there be a delay in the passing of this bill until more consultation can happen.

Madam Vice-Chairperson: Thank you, Ms. Eidse.

* (21:40)

Mr. Derkach: Well, thank you for your presentation once again.

And, as I sit here and listen to the presentations, I am getting more and more concerned that there are numerous shortcomings in this bill, and, although there appears to be support for the bill in principle, it appears that the mechanics of the bill have not been adequately researched or addressed.

And you were the third presenter, now, that I've heard some fairly significant concerns about regarding the profession and regarding the approach that government is taking and a lack of consultation, and you have, once again, echoed that—I think, the words of others that perhaps this bill should be delayed.

Do you have perhaps a message in terms of what appropriate consultation, even with the students' organization should be before this bill becomes law?

Ms. Eidse: I'm not, not entirely sure—sorry. I'm not entirely sure what that would look like. I think from my perspective I'm not involved in the student body a lot. I'm a mom. I'm a busy person so I go to school and I'm just trying to get everything done.

But I've note—when we've talked about it in class, none of the students are aware that this is happening. I'm in the inner city program. It's quite a diverse community of students, and I'm—I was pretty—when we talked about it, other students were quite shocked that nobody had heard of this, and many of the professors hadn't heard of it. So I don't know what the best way to do that is, other than, I mean, the—obviously, if the governing student bodies were aware of it I'm sure that they would be

advocating for more information about it and talking about it more.

But, yes, it is concerning how little seems to be known in a community of people that are about to embark on practice and that this is going to be affecting their practice for the rest of their lives, and haven't had a chance to participate in this process at all.

Mrs. Mitchelson: Yes, I'd just like to thank you very much for your presentation ma'am.

Certainly important for those that are professionals and are looking to become professionals in the social work field to have a say and some input, and it's clear from the presentations that there's been a significant lack of consultation. And I would certainly support that kind of activity before we move forward on this bill.

So thank you for bringing that to our attention.

Ms. Wowchuk: Thank you. Just a couple of points.

It's my understanding that there was an open invitation and presentation to—students, and I'm not aware of all of the details, but there was a presentation to students.

Two points I want to ask you about. You talk about having to practise outside the province if this goes through. Are you aware that this legislation exists in all other provinces?

Ms. Eidse: Yes, I'm aware that it exists. My concern within our province is the process that it's been going through, or lack of process. That's my concern about being a part of that legislation and, as far as the student presentation, I'm not sure if that was on Fort Garry campus or on the inner city campus, but I'm in the inner city campus and I—yes, I hadn't heard anything about that.

Ms. Wowchuk: I guess the other question, you—I want to talk—ask you about the—you talked about an Aboriginal parallel process, and, I guess, though, I would wonder how you would feel if there's a single college as is proposed in this legislation, if you feel that there would be a way that traditional Aboriginal approaches could be worked in to the single college to meet those needs of Aboriginal people.

Ms. Eidse: I think if that were to happen—I think if there was a single college it might be some time before that was an effective thing. I don't know that we're in a place to—that there would be faith that that would actually happen. I think I would have to echo

Mr. Hart in his feeling that there needs to be a separate body, and then—[interjection] Yeah, so.

Mr. Lamoureux: Madam Chair, I know that the presenter made reference in terms of not necessarily being consulted or the school not necessarily being consulted, and the minister says that the school was, in fact, consulted.

I wonder if she could just provide some details because, I think, at the very least, the presenter is owed some sort of a detailed explanation whether or not her campus was actually consulted.

Ms. Wowchuk: Thank you very much. I want to thank you for your presentation and indicate to you that there was consultation with students, and I don't have the full list of them here, but I would be prepared, but there was presentation at St.—at Fort Garry campus. It appears that your campus wasn't one of it, but there was presentations by various groups to the student body, and I thank you for your presentation.

Madam Vice-Chairperson: The next presenter, Diane Roussin. Welcome. You have written presentation? Thank you. You may begin any time. You may begin.

Ms. Diane Roussin (Ma Mawi Wi Chi Itata Centre): Good evening, my name is Diane Roussin and I work with the Ma Mawi Wi Chi Itata Centre, and I'm just glad that I'm not having to present at midnight. The Ma Mawi Wi Chi Itata Centre was given birth in the fall of 1984 by committed community members who sought an Aboriginal solution to supporting and rebuilding families. Since that time, Ma Mawi has worked to support families to better care for children by creating meaningful opportunities for community and family involvement.

We believe that strengthening families is a worthy investment in the future. Ma Mawi has recently celebrated our 25th anniversary. We have grown tremendously in 25 years and have learned very much. We now employ over 200 full-time staff. We deliver over 50 programs. We provide foster families to over 120 children, and we engage numerous community volunteers on a daily basis.

We operate out of nine different locations around Winnipeg. We are Aboriginal controlled and directed with a 100 percent Aboriginal board of directors that are elected by the community. What hasn't changed over the last 25 years is our focus of

building on the strengths of individuals, families, and the community. We continue to promote an approach of capacity building and nurturing families in their ability to provide secure environments for their children. It is that approach that is so vital to the work we do and to the success of the community. We feel that the work we do and the way in which we do it has not been a part of the dialogue around this bill.

So, with that, we'd like to formally declare our concerns about Bill 9, The Social Work Profession Act. We certainly fully support the views of the Aboriginal Social Workers' Society so I'll say that right off the top. The proposed—and what you've heard much of tonight, I'm going to just reiterate. The proposed legislation would establish a Manitoba College of Social Workers that will essentially have the power to decide who gets to call themselves a social worker to be granted a certificate of practice. Social workers will be required to have a minimum Bachelor of social work degree, compulsory payment of an annual fee and completion of professional knowledge development courses as determined by the college. The annual registration fees could amount to about \$900,000 in annual revenues for this new licensing body.

The Manitoba Association of Social Workers and the Manitoba Institute of Registered Social Workers has been advocating for this licensing authority for many years. They have a membership of about 900. It is estimated that there are about 3,000 social workers in the province of Manitoba. We believe that it is critical that the majority of social workers who are not members of the association or the institute have their voices heard about this legislation.

The association and the institute membership profile tends to reflect social workers in private practice or institutionally based social workers, a large number being hospital social workers, as membership in the association or institute is a requirement of their employment. We feel that the association, therefore, does not adequately represent the views of community-based social workers or Aboriginal social workers.

* (21:50)

One of our major concerns about the proposed legislation is the question of who decides what is valid social work knowledge. Eurocentric-oriented knowledge base, which forms the foundation of social work practice, can only legitimately be viewed

as just one form of helping knowledge. There are many forms of traditional, indigenous and community knowledge that must be recognized in the social work field besides the predominant status quo.

Mr. Chairperson in the Chair

To date, the proposed legislation and the Manitoba Association of Social Workers and the Manitoba Institute of Registered Social Workers have not demonstrated the capacity to engage in an inclusive relationship with the Aboriginal community on the issue of representation and what constitutes valid social work knowledge and practice.

We are recommending the following amendments be made to Bill 9. We appreciate that the provincial government's commitment to devolve child welfare services to First Nations and Métis communities as a means to begin to recognize and address the impact of colonization regarding the child welfare system. In the spirit of devolution, we recommend that The Social Work Profession Act include the establishment of a parallel college of Aboriginal social workers in Manitoba that would be responsible to its membership for implementing the legislation.

That The Social Work Profession Act legislation be reviewed by a representative committee of Aboriginal social workers, agencies and organizations for their input prior to the third and final reading of Bill 9.

That the legislation mandate that all fees for licensing social workers be divided between the Manitoba College of Social Workers and the Aboriginal College of Social Workers in Manitoba. The equitable division of the fees would be negotiated between the Aboriginal Social Workers' Society of Manitoba and the Manitoba Association of Social Workers and the Manitoba Institute of Registered Social Workers, prior to the application of the legislation, with full consideration given to the number of Aboriginal social workers in Manitoba, the total number of social workers in Manitoba and the estimated number of Aboriginal peoples served by most agencies and organizations in relation to the number of people served by those agencies.

We are concerned that the important role of social justice within the social work field will be diminished in the move towards the professionalization of social work. Licensing and

professionalization promotes the technical aspects of helping with a growing emphasis on impartiality, neutrality and apolitical service.

Social work is unique in that its code of ethics emphasizes social justice goals. For many social workers, licensing does little to address the root causes of poverty and oppression in our society. Therefore, we recommend that the Manitoba College of Social Workers be mandated in legislation to provide an annual fund to support social justice work, including the research, issue organization and education. The legislation would include the provision of a seven-person committee to govern the fund, including three positions appointed by the college and four positions appointed by community organizations.

The formula for determining the amount of this fund that would be included in the legislation would be negotiated between social justice groups and the Manitoba Association of Social Workers and the Manitoba Institute of Registered Social Workers prior to the final adoption of the legislation.

Meegwetch, and thank you for the opportunity to present our views to you today.

Mr. Chairperson: Thank you, Ms. Roussin, for your presentation.

Questions of the presenter?

Mrs. Mitchelson: Thank you very much, Ms. Roussin, for your presentation. It looks like there's been a lot of thought go into a lot of detail within the legislation.

Were you—was your organization consulted during the lead up to introduction of this legislation?

Ms. Roussin: No, it depends on who your talking—who was being consulted. I know that we were contacted by the Aboriginal Social Workers' Society and were, sort of, flagged about this bill coming up, and so were consulted by them. And so, obviously, we have been thinking together about what our response or what, you know, presentations could be to this bill. But to my knowledge, the Ma Mawi Wi Chi Itata Centre hasn't been consulted by anyone else that I know of.

Mrs. Mitchelson: Thank you very much and there is a significant amount of detail that's been presented in your recommendations for amendments to the legislation.

Do you think it might be important for some of this detail to be worked out in consultation with Ma Mawi plus many of the other organizations out there that seem to feel that not enough attention has been paid to the detail that's gone into this legislation? Should it be delayed until that kind of consultative process is undertaken?

Ms. Roussin: Yes, I do. I think that there—you know, the work—the kind of work that we do is already very unrecognized and, so, you know, with the idea that we would just move forward and figure it out later is pretty offensive to me.

You know, I just attended a session today by Justice Murray Sinclair, and he was, you know—he's heading up the Truth and Reconciliation Committee, and he's, you know, talking about how the best of intentions that went into the whole residential school era, you know, has had such devastating effects on us as Aboriginal people and on our families and on our future. And so, you know, like, we—this is 2009. Like, we need to be a fundamental part of these discussions, and so having had the opportunity to come to a presentation is such a small start. You know, being invited into a consultation is a little bit better, not much. I would like to see engagement in this dialogue, not just consultation, not just presentation.

Mr. Lamoureux: I'm actually quite impressed. You indicate that Ma Mawi Wi Chi Itata now employs 200 full-time staff. How many of those would be actual social workers?

Ms. Roussin: I don't know. We've not asked ourselves how many of us have a Bachelor or a Master's or a Ph.D. in social work. The work that we do is so much about building the capacity of the community that everyone has an opportunity to be a helper, and so what we're trying to do is support the capacity of families to support themselves, and so that's—you know, we're not trying to be the professionals that are delivering the service all the time for the families that need fixing. Like, that is so not what we're trying to do.

So we, you know, we value education, but it's not sort of the pinnacle to the kind of work that we do.

Mr. Lamoureux: To what—to what degree—and I'm trying to think because in your presentation, you make reference to having that separate body, and I'm thinking that in the long term, would it be better to have the one body, but ensure that there's a strong

Aboriginal representation on that body so that we don't develop two tiers of different types of social workers, one that's with this group, and one's with this other group. Is it better to have one? Like, when you look at other professions, whether it's the teachers or others, they seem to have one. But if there was assurance in legislation that there would be a percentage of that—of the board of Aboriginal background, would that, would that suffice in terms of—from your perspective?

Ms. Roussin: Well, I think that that question would be a really good question to pose out there in further consultations with other, you know, First Nation Aboriginal groups out there. My personal opinion about that is that, you know, we have to look at how many people out there are being served by the profession and, you know, we know that that is a large amount of Aboriginal people. And so I don't know if one or two people on one body is really going to be representative of the amount of people that are being served by the social work profession. So, you know, I'm not sure if there's a clear-cut formula for coming to that, but one or two may not be enough is my initial thought of that.

Mr. Derkach: I wanna pick up on your point regarding the engagement, if you like. You use that term. Where does a government begin in terms of engaging Aboriginal peoples in this kind of specific discussion? Is it at the social work level? Is it at the heads of Aboriginal government level? Or are there places where all of those individuals can be engaged in developing legislation that truly represents what is needed—the need for change in this province? And maybe you could enlighten us in that regard.

Ms. Roussin: I think that there would be multiple approaches. I think that there's a great diversity in the work that we as Aboriginal people do, and so certainly there are, you know, the authorities in place that are doing the child protection pieces, and so they absolutely need to be consulted.

* (22:00)

I think that our—even our political organizations hear from their members a lot all the time, and so, you know, they need to be consulted. I know Ma Mawi Wi Chi Itata Centre is an urban organization. We have many informal and formal networks with other sister organizations that do the same kinda work here in Winnipeg, and so we coalition all the time as well, and so certainly we need to be consulted.

So I think you have to do a number of things and that's why I say engagement because engagement is not just about talking to me once and then hoping you've heard me and then go away and interpret what you think I've said. You know, engagement is about having an ongoing dialogue about something and it's about checking back, and it's having two-way communication, and it's being prepared for what you hear. I think consultation, we say okay, what do you think and then whatever it is we think may or may not make it to the table, you know, and that's not engagement. Engagement is giving serious consideration to what it is you're asking, what you might be hearing. You might not like what you're hearing but you've asked the question.

Mr. Chairperson: Thank you very much.

Ms. Wowchuk: I want to thank you for your presentation and for the work you do at Ma Mawi Wi Chi and I've heard many good things about the work that's done there.

You've talked about—I wanted to ask you, in this legislation, the legislation is for a, for a single college, one college and I've asked other people this same question is: Do you think that within the parameters of a single college we—the college could learn about traditional Aboriginal approaches and apply that through the college to address some of your concerns about how issues are being handled?

Ms. Roussin: I mean I would hope that the college is open to that learning. I can't say whether or not the college is capable of learning that or not. I think that that knowledge exists. I think that we'd be ready to share that knowledge.

I think that the structure of the one college already predetermines a lot of things and so that structure might not be as conducive to incorporating Aboriginal traditional knowledge as we would like so we're already a little bit down the garden path here. And so I'm not sure if you can turn that around so, but, certainly, I think that would—my question would be, is, would the college be amenable to changing itself if it's starting to have that dialogue and finds out that it is set up in a way that is not conducive to Aboriginal traditional knowledge. Would it be open to change? I mean change is difficult.

An Honourable Member: Good question and thank you very—

Mr. Chairperson: Minister Wowchuk.

Ms. Wowchuk: That was a very good question and thank you very much for your presentation.

Mr. Chairperson: Thank you very much, Ms. Roussin, for your presentation this evening and for your patience.

Next presenter I have on the list is Glenda Peebles, MASW-MIRSW Aboriginal Interest Group.

Good evening, Ms. Peebles. Welcome. Thank you for your patience.

Do you have a written presentation?

Ms. Glenda Peebles (MASW/MIRSW Aboriginal Interest Group): Yes, I do. You have to excuse me, I'm sick right now, so.

Mr. Chairperson: Okay, we'll adjust the microphone for you. Take your time. Do you need water?

Ms. Peebles: Yes actually. I don't know—whose water is that.

Mr. Chairperson: Please proceed when you're ready, Ms. Peebles.

Ms. Peebles: Thank you.

Good evening. Thank you, Mr. Chairperson. I'm very pleased to be here today and I wish to express my appreciation for—to the members of this committee for the opportunity to provide this presentation on Bill 9.

My name is Glenda Peebles, and I am an Aboriginal registered social worker. I am presenting here today on behalf of the Aboriginal Interest Group which is a committee of the Manitoba Association of Social Workers and Manitoba Institute of Registered Social Workers. Excuse me.

In 2008, the professional association recognized the importance of incorporating a representative voice for the Aboriginal perspective relating to the governance and operational affairs of the organization and reviewing practices to ensure an awareness of the cultural priorities for Aboriginal social work. In an effort to achieve this, the Aboriginal Interest Group was formed.

On behalf of the MASW-MIRSW Aboriginal Interest Group I am expressing support for this legislation and the development of the Manitoba College of Social Workers.

I believe that it is essential that there exist standard criteria for use of the title social worker,

and that the public should be assured that those persons who refer to themselves as social workers do, in fact, hold academic qualifications from an approved educational institution.

Of particular importance to me is that the formation of a College of Social Workers offers the opportunity to establish a unified profession for social work that will enable all sectors to work together to strengthen the profession.

Social work is a very diverse profession with many sectors of practice and a broad range of views. The social work profession as a whole can benefit from all of these perspectives, including the important and valuable knowledge of the healing that exists within the Aboriginal community. With all social workers joining the college, regardless of their divergent views and differences, all will be able to contribute to the profession and be active participants in the development of this profession. Drawing from each other's strengths, the profession will be able to evolve to be genuinely representative and ensure that social work services are responsive to the communities that social workers serve.

In the spirit of this collaboration, I wish to add my voice to those supporting this legislation and to the development of the College of Social Workers.

Thank you for this opportunity to express my support, and to provide you with my perspective regarding this important legislation.

Mr. Chairperson: Thank you very much for your presentation, Ms. Peebles.

Questions to the presenter?

Mr. Derkach: Thank you for your presentation, and I think we could all say that a unified body would be much more productive than bodies that are split apart and are separate, and so therefore in that regard I want to thank you for the presentation.

But I also want to ask the question, because you are Aboriginal and therefore must have some views with regard to more broader—or broader—consultation with the Aboriginal community, since we've heard on a number of occasions today that the bill could be strengthened if in fact there were more consultation and some of the deficiencies were addressed. Do you hold that same view that, in fact, the legislation could be enhanced and strengthened if in fact there were greater consultation with Aboriginal people in the province?

Ms. Peebles: Well, in regards to the consultation process, I was part of those consultation processes. We had gone to four of the child welfare authorities last summer, like the general, northern, southern and Métis. Also, that we had met with Mr. Hart from the Aboriginal society on a couple of occasions regarding these consultations. Further to that, I believe that our group was established in response to looking at the Aboriginal views and perspectives and how those can be addressed in this new college, and it is within this college that I believe that those will and could be addressed in the same sense.

Also, I think that when we were doing these consultations, and in this Aboriginal Interest Group we did pose the question out there asking for participation in this group so that these can be addressed, to which to date none—we haven't gotten any response from that.

* (22:10)

Mr. Lamoureux: Just quickly, I believe, and I don't want to put any words in Mrs. Schroeder's presentation, but, if memory serves me correct, I thought that there was—that there was no objection to the possibility of having some sort of a legislative amendment possibly that would allow for a guarantee of Aboriginal representation on the board. You know, don't quote me on that, but I believe that to be the case. You might want to confer by looking back at her if you like, but do you personally have any problem with having some sort of a guarantee of a percentage of being Aboriginal background? Just given, you know, when you look at the volumes and the clientele and so forth, in terms of percentages, does it make sense to you to allow for that?

Ms. Peebles: Absolutely. I think that we do need more representation. I am part, like I said, I am part of the MIS—MIRSW, it's such a mouthful to say, but I am part of that, and I have asked my Aboriginal social work colleagues to participate in what I believe to be looking at these perspectives.

I sit on another board—I sit on another Aboriginal interest group which is national, and which is how I got onto this group here, but, again, it gets frustrating for me as an Aboriginal person to have these Aboriginal social workers work with me to do this kind of work. So it's frustrating for me as well.

Mr. Chairperson: Further questions?

Ms. Wowchuk: Ms. Peebles, I know you're not feeling well this evening, but I want to express my

appreciation for you coming out this evening and, in fact, in spelling out what your role has been, and what the role of the Aboriginal Interest Group is within the social workers and the registered social workers of Manitoba, because you've clarified some points about how Aboriginal social workers are involved, and what the opportunities are for you to be involved. I appreciate that, and I hope you're feeling better soon.

Mr. Chairperson: Ms. Peebles, do you wish to comment?

Ms. Peebles: No, that's fine. Thanks.

Mr. Chairperson: Okay. Any further questions of the presenter? Thank you, Ms. Peebles, and we wish you well.

Next presenter we have on our list is Jill Brody, private citizen.

Jill Brody, good evening, welcome. Thank you for your patience. You have a written presentation?

Ms. Jill Brody (Private Citizen): No, I don't.

Mr. Chairperson: Please proceed when you're ready.

Ms. Brody: Good evening, Mr. Chairman and committee members. My name is Jill Brody. I graduated just over two years ago with a Bachelor of Social Work from the University of Manitoba, Inner City Social Work program. Since then, I've been involved in community-based social justice research, and today I would like to voice my opposition to Bill 9, The Social Work Profession Act.

While I do support the concepts of professionalism, accountability, and ongoing learning, there are a number of aspects of The Social Work Profession Act that I believe must be considered before the bill can be acceptable to me. I'll speak to four of these issues today.

First, within the current bill, I find a limited and predetermined view of what is social work knowledge. This knowledge is founded on the practices of a fraction of practitioners, all of whom belong to the MASW-MIRSW, which I do not. Further, it would seem that through the College of Social Workers which will be established, this selective knowledge will be reinforced and perpetuated through examinations, professional development requirements, and performance audits.

The resulting practice base, thus, is exclusive of indigenous and community-based ways of knowing and helping, and so is predominately based on institutional or mandated social work practice. This Eurocentric knowledge and practice base is now being challenged, even as many academics and practitioners question the very concept of what is knowledge itself. This discourse is especially critical as it concerns our Aboriginal and Métis peoples, our new Canadians, and other disenfranchised and marginalized groups.

Second, it has been—as it has been estimated that the MIRSW has consulted primarily with its own 900 or so members, the voices of some 2 to 3,000-plus practitioners, then, are not reflected in the bill. Nor have the voices of social work students attending the University of Manitoba been heard.

In fact, in my experience, relatively few students are aware of the MIRSW or the MASW. In my four years of study, during which I was quite active in student politics and activities, when my fellow learners were presented with the idea of licensing, many were so involved in their current studies that they did not give serious thought to the implications of licensure, or, being earlier in their education, they did not have the capacity or time to realize how this would potentially impact them, their practice and their clients.

I believe this disregarding was a—this disregarding of the student population was a critical oversight that must be corrected before licensure becomes mandatory.

I must ask the following questions: How will the passage of Bill 9 affect the current curriculums of social work programs at our degree-granting institutions? If an academy of higher learning bestows on one the degree of the Bachelor of social work, what higher or different qualifications will the college hold one accountable to? What will the college deem unimportant? Who will decide what is valid social work knowledge?

A third problematic aspect, to me, of Bill 9 is the college's power to investigate complaints against a licensed social worker, but the conspicuous absence of any mention of what will be done for a public member once a complaint is launched against a licensed social worker. An audit will be conducted into the alleged actions of the social worker and so forth, but there is no regard for what needs a complainant may have.

If protection of the consumer of social work services is of concern to the college, there is no care followed through with the complainant. The proposed legislation does not direct that any appropriate remedial follow-up or referral services be provided to that person, no matter what the allegation against the practitioner or the negative potential outcomes suffered by the complainant.

Again, I have questions: Do not agencies mandated, non-mandated, non-profit and otherwise have internal policies that require workers to inform clients of their rights and the responsibilities of the social worker, including the right to lodge a complaint against a social worker, and how to do so?

I can relate that a number of years ago, I was employed at a not-for-profit agency as a counsellor and worked with counsellors who held social work degrees, although at the time I did not. That agency did have such a policy for clients, including the right to voice a formal complaint to senior management and/or an outside MSW, who oversaw and supervised the counsellors at this agency.

This policy worked. The social workers at the agency did not have to pay registration fees to ensure that their clients were protected against poor practice or malpractice. What protection or remedy does the College of Social Workers truly provide to wronged community members?

Lastly, the Canadian Association of Social Workers' code of ethics explicitly directs social workers to pursue social justice objectives, which, for practitioners such as myself, who participate directly in these endeavours on a daily basis, involves ways and means outside of the technical best practices used in most agencies and organizations. This work focusses on structural, contemporary and historical forces influencing poverty, oppression and marginalization.

The licensing of social workers through the College of Social Workers does not address the issues implicit in social justice work and research and, further, does little, directly or indirectly, to address or support the role of social justice as a major function of social worker.

* (22:20)

Therefore, in addition to supporting the amendments and recommendations of the Aboriginal social workers association presented tonight by Mr. Hart, I also add my concerns that the important role

of social justice within the social work field will be diminished by the move towards the professionalization of social work. Licensing and professionalization promotes the technical aspects of helping, with a growing emphasis on impartiality, neutrality and apolitical service. Social work is unique in that its code of ethics emphasizes social worker–social justice goals.

For many social workers, licensing does little to address the root causes of poverty and oppression in our society. Therefore, I also recommend that the Manitoba College of Social Workers be mandated in legislation to provide an annual fund to support social justice work, including research, issue organization and education. The legislation should include the provision of a seven-person-kit committee to govern the fund, including three positions appointed by the college and four positions appointed by community organization. A formula for determining the amount of the fund would be included in the legislation and negotiated between social justice groups and MASW-MIRSW prior to the final adoption of the legislation.

Thank you so very much for your time this evening.

Mr. Chairperson: Thank you, Ms. Brody, for your presentation.

Questions to the presenter?

Ms. Mitchelson: Mr. Chair, not a question, but a comment. I just want to thank you very much. You've articulated very clearly a lot of the same issues that other presenters have articulated tonight, and I want to thank you for that.

Ms. Wowchuk: I would echo the same sentiments. You've been patient to wait here tonight to express your views, and I thank you for your thought and your comments that you've given to this committee.

Mr. Chairperson: Any further comments or questions for the presenter? Seeing none, thank you very much, Ms. Brody, for your presentation this evening and for your patience.

Ms. Brody: Thank you.

Mr. Chairperson: Next presenter I have is Dr. Donald Burke, President of Booth College.

Good evening, sir. Welcome. Thank you for your patience. You have a written presentation I see.

Mr. Donald Burke (Booth College): I do, yes.

Mr. Chairperson: Give us a few moments to distribute and then I'll give you the signal to proceed.

Please proceed, Dr. Burke.

Mr. Burke: On behalf of Booth College, I want to express my thanks to the committee for the opportunity to make a presentation supporting Bill 9, The Social Work Profession Act.

Booth College is a small, Christian university college, which offers a number of degree programs, including a Bachelor of social work. The college is supported by the Salvation Army, the largest non-governmental direct provider of social services in Canada. The Salvation Army has been providing social services in Canada for more than a century and world wide operates in 118 countries. Therefore, it's natural for Booth College, as the premier degree-granting institution operated by the international Salvation Army, it's appropriate and natural for us to offer a social work program that leads to the Bachelor of social work degree.

Our purpose this evening is twofold: First, to express our support for Bill 9 and, second, more specifically to express our support for section 10 (1), which provides the board of the proposed Manitoba College of Social Workers with the authority to approve for registration, graduates of educational programs, which are not accredited by the Canadian Association for Social Work Education.

So, first, we wish to express our support for the principle of regulation of the practice of social work. By creating the Manitoba College of Social Workers and by making registration mandatory, we're convinced that this legislation will advance the practice of social work in the province. It will provide increased credibility to the social work profession and greater accountability of the profession to the public. Those who practise as social workers will be guaranteed to have acquired the knowledge, values and skills deemed essential to meet the needs of their clientele.

Equally important, we're convinced that the regulation of the social work profession through the College of Social Workers will improve our ability as a society to respond to the challenges of poverty and injustice.

Our second purpose tonight is to express our strong support for the provision of alternative educational routes to registration as social workers,

in addition to the completion of social work programs accredited by the Canadian Association for Social Work Education. Section 10(1) of the bill provides the board of the Manitoba College of Social Workers with the latitude to evaluate alternative routes to registration, such as this Bachelor of social work program at Booth College.

Historically, our college has had an ongoing and supportive relationship with the Manitoba Association of Social Workers and the Manitoba Institute of Registered Social Workers. Graduates of our program have been recognized by and registered with MIRSW since 1997. In fact, at the present time, more than 30 graduates of Booth College's social work program are registered in Manitoba. Graduates of our program have served on the board of directors of MASW-MIRSW, as well as several committees of the association, and one graduate of the program has served as chair of the membership committee and as president of MASW-MIRSW. We as an institution are committed to the work of MASW-MIRSW and want to ensure that our graduates are able to continue to contribute, both to the social work profession and to the new Manitoba College of Social Workers.

Booth College social work graduates work across the province in a variety of subfields within the social work profession, from child welfare, to addictions, to human trafficking, to school social work. We're convinced that, in its openness to the Booth College program, MASW-MIRSW has exercised responsible stewardship over the social work profession, and we hope to see that same responsible stewardship continued with the implementation of the provisions of Bill 9.

It may be helpful to the committee for me to rehearse, briefly, the reason that Booth College's social work program is not accredited by the Canadian Association for Social Work Education. When the program was first established in the late 1980s, we entered into discussions with the Canadian Association of Schools of Social Work, the forerunner of the current CASWE. After several years of consultations and after making formal application for candidacy for accreditation, we were informed that only programs housed within institutions that are members of the Association of Universities and Colleges of Canada are eligible for accreditation. Unfortunately, the small size of our institution does not permit us to gain this prerequisite membership in AUCC and, therefore, we are not permitted to apply for accreditation with CASWE. If this impediment were to be removed, we would

immediately begin the process to seek accreditation with CASWE.

However, in the meantime, we have worked to design our programs with the curricular standards of CASWE constantly in mind, and we always make every effort to comply with those standards. We believe that the quality of our program and the education that it provides has been confirmed by the current MASW-MIRSW practice of registering Booth College graduates, by our ability to identify field placements for our students in agencies across Winnipeg and beyond, and by the fact that, for three consecutive years, all of our graduates have gained employment within four months of graduation.

In conclusion, I wish to restate Booth College's support for The Social Work Profession Act in Manitoba and for the profession itself. We're convinced that the legislation, as it currently exists, will provide for appropriate regulation of the profession and will provide the board of the new Manitoba College of Social Workers with the latitude to determine appropriate qualifications for registration.

Mr. Chairperson: Thank you very much, Dr. Burke, for your presentation.

Questions of the presenter?

Mrs. Mitchelson: I want to thank you for your—your presentation and for the good work that I know that you do at the college, and thanks for your patience tonight in waiting to be heard. Thank you.

Ms. Wowchuk: Thank you, Mr. Burke, for your presentation and that—the work that you can do.

If you were listening to presentations this evening, we heard a lot about how Aboriginal traditions and Aboriginal approaches can be worked in. And, given your support to the legislation that says that there's going to be a single college under this legislation, can you give your—do you have thoughts, or how we might incorporate or how the college might look at how traditional Aboriginal approaches can be incorporated?

* (22:30)

Mr. Burke: I think I'm at a disadvantage because, personally, I'm not a social worker. I'm here in my role as President of Booth College, so I don't feel that I'm qualified to comment on that.

Mr. Lamoureux: I just want to try a quick comment, and it's nice with Booth College being

associated with the Salvation Army. The Salvation Army does a lot of wonderful things, not only in the province of Manitoba, obviously.

Do you have graduates that will go outside of the province of Manitoba to practise social work? Do you know offhand?

Mr. Burke: Yes, we do. Across the country and most provinces we have graduates who have registered as social workers.

Mr. Lamoureux: Just—I guess, just for the record, I'm aware of at least one student that goes to Booth College that happens to be a constituent, and I think it's good to have that option, and applaud your's and Salvation Army's efforts and continued commitment to social justice in our province. Thank you.

Mr. Chairperson: Dr. Burke, any further comments?

Seeing no further questions, thank you very much for your patience and your presentation.

Mr. Burke: Thank you.

Mr. Chairperson: The next presenter I have on the list is Lawrence Deane, private citizen. Lawrence Deane. Lawrence Deane. Seeing that Lawrence Deane—

Floor Comment: He left just a long time—

Mr. Chairperson: Seeing that Lawrence Deane is not here, his name will be dropped to the bottom of the list.

Next name I have on the list is Oleksandr Kondrashov. I hope I pronounced your name correct, sir [*interjection*]. My apologies if I mispronounced it.

Mr. Oleksandr Kondrashov (Private Citizen): That's okay. It's Oleksandr Kondrashov—Or Sasha.

Mr. Chairperson: Okay, or Sasha.

Mr. Kondrashov: It's a short version.

Mr. Chairperson: I like that. That's good.

Do you have a written presentation?

Mr. Kondrashov: No, unfortunately.

Mr. Chairperson: Please proceed when you're ready.

Mr. Kondrashov: Thank you. Thank you so much for giving me opportunity to speak at 10:30

Winnipeg time. I'm Ukrainian, so it's now getting to the morning.

But, in Canada, I'm teaching at the Faculty of Social Work, a sessional instructor at the same time I'm doing my Ph.D. And what I was thinking actually, when I got an e-mail from centre of anti-oppressive practice that this meeting is happening here. I came to students and some of my students were up to date preparing presentations about it, and I say, okay, there will be an act coming into place, I say, what act? I'm like, oh, I—that's—I want start the class. So students were not really aware of the act coming into—I explained to them licensing process, and the whole idea about there—I actually support the act because a whole—I'm just reading my Richmond book from 1922 about a social case worker when social work profession was firstly come into place and the whole idea was, do we need a profession or not?

So, finally, thanks so much for your help to getting this done—8,000 time for social profession come into place.

As a social worker who are coming from the country where there is no social work—unfortunately, at home a degree is not recognized. So here I'm really, again, for the idea that social workers can practise social work if they have a proper qualification level. And coming from the Faculty of Social Work I'm also thinking because in every province there is an act. There is one of unifying body among the provinces. It's Canadian Association of Schools of Social Workers. So they require certain standards of education. This is basic standard. I came from Ukraine. I need to prove that my standard is the same. Faculty of Social Work can do this.

So I'm not—and, again, I'm not too sure if we need to have a additional college who will do additional qualifications because we had a faculty which—consistent with all the standards across Canada, which can do this job of—if they grant a degree it's a Bachelor of social work degree. It's a unifying degree thing.

So I was—the point—like section 10.1, is one of the major point as the Faculty of Social Work can grant a degree as a basic requirement for the social work profession as a beginning idea.

Secondly, I really also want to emphasize—and you already heard about this lots of time—that Aboriginal community and there was different

representing, I want to say for immigrants, refugee. It's important to hear different voices. I know consultation is sometimes hard to come because people can come, sometimes not. But it is important to somehow incorporate their presence in the board and, as long as Manitoba Association of Social Workers want to have them in place, that will be good to have in legislation because legislation is a basic document. In class we analyze all those different legislation and, just as every province has, they do not have specific quota for different, but I think Manitoba can also do something different, too, in the way because, again, this is the only province which will create social work profession act—not social service act, social worker act, a total, but social profession act. So maybe in a way of getting—which started in 1922 as a profession—we will create something different, but, at the same time, unifying with other provinces to have a common voice for social workers.

So that's my biggest concerns which were happening from discussion, because I would love also to hear some e-mails from MASW sending to people that it's invited to share, and some students will also get ideas, not only instructor who is teaching in Thompson or going to Dauphin telling them that the act is coming into place so people who are practising can have the voice. But I think it's a very good idea to move forward with legislation that might not be right now, as you might have already had today, and there was an earlier discussion to postpone.

Again, as many people can hear the different opinions that will help to come to the unifying idea what it can be done, but profession should have its own body.

So thank you so much, and I will not take a long time today because there is obviously more presenters coming.

Mr. Chairperson: Thank you, Sasha, for your presentation.

Questions of the presenter?

Ms. Wowchuk: *Ukrainian spoken. Translation unavailable.*

I want to say to Sasha that I'm very pleased that he took this opportunity to come and share his thoughts and just give us your thoughts on how it is important that we have legislation like this where social workers can be registered and have the ability

to work anywhere in this country. And I want to wish you very well in your studies here while you're here in Manitoba.

Mr. Chairperson: Mr. Kondrashov, did you wish to comment?

Mr. Kondrashov: *Ukrainian spoken. Translation unavailable.* And I hope together we will do with work to making sure that the social work profession is recognized, it's practised and it's protected, so people all over the province have opportunity to say, we are social workers, so there will be no such abuse of profession and the title. That's my always goal, to make sure that my students are protected and also community are protected.

Mrs. Mitchelson: Sasha, I just want to thank you very much for that presentation. And you've made some very good points. Thank you.

Mr. Chairperson: Any further questions of the presenter?

Thank you, Sasha, for your presentation this evening and for your patience.

Next presenter we have on the list is Greg McVicker, private citizen.

Good evening, sir. Welcome, thank you for your patience. Do you have a written presentation?

Mr. Greg McVicker (Private Citizen): I do, indeed, yes.

Mr. Chairperson: Give us a moment to distribute to committee members, and then I'll give you the signal to proceed.

Please proceed, Mr. McVicker.

Mr. McVicker: Thank you very much. I'd just like to start off by saying *Gaelic spoken*, and what that is, is that's my language of Gaeilge. I heard Ukrainian spoke tonight. I've heard French and indigenous languages spoke, but I also speak my traditional language of Irish. So what I said there was: Good evening, my friends. How are you this evening? I'm doing quite well. I hope you're well too. Thank you very much.

Normally I do speak from the heart when I present in communities, and I do speak with a Belfast accent, so if you have any troubles with me tonight, just maybe call the BBC and see if they can get a translator in there for tonight's services, if you're still burning the midnight oil.

Normally I do speak from the heart. I have a bit of a prepared presentation and I'm kind of appalled that I had to do that. I only found out about this in the last couple of days, and I'm quite appalled at the fact that here we are trying to pass a legislative bill, which will impact and affect the practice of social work with respect to lack of input from any of the members that are not associated to the MASW.

However, I will go my speech here directly. As mentioned on paper here, I would like to say tonight that I would like to present to you my opinions on proposed college of registered social workers, as set forth by the executive membership of MASW and MIRS. I would like to clearly state that what I am about to present are my own views that I have written and have not been scripted for me by any agency representing their views. This would fly in the face of freedom of speech and would go against the values that I uphold, both as a social worker—as an undergrad social worker having a Bachelor's degree under the code of ethics as set forward by the Canadian Association of Social Workers—and that of myself.

* (22:40)

Social work is a profession has long prided itself in the value of helping other people. Having the presence of mind to set forth upon each day and present to the best of our ability the actions of helping others who are less fortunate than ourselves is an honour. There are those whom we seek to serve that may be enriched by our efforts, and there are those who are directly impacted by the work we do, and in the systems in which we provide our services. Therefore, workers struggle with the challenges that are presented to us through policy, and struggle with the decisions we have to make for those that come before us. Policy makers are mostly male, while front-line workers are mostly female. This comes from Eurocentric ideologies and patriarchal views.

Prior to becoming a young—and I question the word "young"—vibrant and recently graduated social worker, I had the absolute honour of sitting on five faculty committees as a student representative, in which I was granted the opportunity of challenging social policy while sitting alongside some of the best social workers I've had the fortune of engaging in dialogue with and presenting views either in favour or against or in disagreement with.

These colleagues are professors at the faculty, but I was allowed to enrich my knowledge, let my

voice be heard, and participate in the very faculty from which I sought my social work degree. As with any profession, I was met with jubilation in some areas, with disappointment in others. This is part of a democratic and just society in that we were all allowed to present our views, I would hope that the same recognition be provided to the numbers being presented tonight—2,100 social workers in Manitoba in this very province who are not currently part of the MASW within this province, rather than having a bill be passed through without proper input, and we've had dialogue with respect to that tonight, too.

Now, I have had the opportunity of being a U of M Fort Garry campus student to sit and listen to the presentations by the MASW and the MIRS membership, but often found the structure being presented was of largely disconnected from the constituents whom we seek to serve as social workers, and that is why I did not sign on to the MASW, but I'm recognized under the CASW, which I do so quite proudly.

As a student, I was also provided the opportunity of challenging one form of feminist theory, and this is where I'm going to bring in a personal perspective here—in which there are many various forms of theories in which we use as social work practitioners. Now, however, society continues to uphold patriarchal belief systems and structures, which traditionally define women's roles of staying at home to cook, clean, raise children, be complacent and provide conjugal duty to their partner. Many women meet glass ceilings; their incomes represent 73 percent of that of their male counterparts, yet their efforts in education are the same. Is mankind dominant or has society simply become complacent, accepting those who oppress feminist theories, ideals and methodologies as being rightly justified?

Privilege wheels address advantage, opportunity and benefits. Straight, white, married Christian males who are able-bodied, healthy, educated and unemployed, have children and are home-owners, between the ages of 30 to 45, receive greater privileges and recognition, while those outside these criteria are considered socialist, liberal or radical separatists. As a male, I fit within segments of that very wheel that I'm speaking about. However, I do fear that the proposed bill in its current format, as it sits before this committee tonight, upholds opportunistic views of privilege and advantage, while segregating those on the outside and furthering the disconnect between social workers and the

constituents whom we seek to serve, or those who seek services from us.

And I challenge this very perspective of the privilege wheel which I just spoke to. I conceived, defined and published my own term with relation to feminist theory as a "femanist," and the m-a-n is the emphasis within "femanist" theory. Now, as a "femanist," I welcome feminist theories as they challenge my views and enhance my role of advocating that women are afforded equal opportunity, status, benefits, rights and pay. Further to this, a "femanist" is any person who, regardless of their gender or sexual orientation, challenges the status quo by seeking to end all practices of oppression and domination towards each and every individual by incorporating holistic practices, and through the creation of equality for all humanity.

Now, as you will have noticed in that definition is inclusion of all people that incorporates holistic practices and equality for all humanity and challenges the status quo. Aboriginal social workers make up an incredibly small percentage of the work force, and the systems in which they work and which may not understand or appreciate the rich world views, languages and cultural background of Aboriginal peoples. And, again, I'm using the term "Aboriginal" here, which I'm not comfortable with 'cause, having served in an organization, a political organization that represents the political views and advocacy for southern First Nations in Manitoba, I was often informed by my Grand Chief, a Morris J. Swan Shannacappo, that the term "Aboriginal" means less than original. "Ab" is a Spanish term—so, therefore, I would prefer to use First Nations, Inuit and Métis, 'cause it also acknowledges the fact that they are distinct people like we all here in this room tonight.

Take away the social constructs and terminology that is bestowed upon us and created by us as people in society, we are, at the end of the day, human.

Now I feel that the proposed college does not encompass such worldviews, and is exclusive to one majority, which will, again, create a further divide between those who have access to privilege and those that do not. And I learned this in 2007 as well, and the fact that I took 22 social work students, practising social work students who had not yet graduated, but they're degree, to a First Nation in Manitoba, none of which had ever stepped foot onto

a First Nation community, or, as known here in Canada, a reserve.

Now that upholds a disconnect, not consulting with First Nations people, Inuit people or Métis people to engage us in the profession of social work. Therefore, we had no prior knowledge of—yet we present systems that are theories and best practice for what we believe serves the best interest of the constituents, when realistically it serves our best interests 'cause it upholds our profession and keeps us employed.

As a practising social worker and following the femanist perspective, I support those who are against anti-oppressive practices within a college of registered social workers, as we've heard tonight from Dr. Hart and a few colleagues that have presented.

Now, to my understanding, and the way it is presented right now, it upholds the oppression and status quo, and after having served an organization which advocates against such imperial and patriarchal structures, plus, having been raised and personally affected by a dominant society torn aback—torn apart by political warfare which was fronted by religion guise—as a guise, I do not wish to further uphold the oppression of others around me to afford me the right to be recognized as a registered social worker within the province of Manitoba. And I used registered in quotations because, again, I'm not registered under MASW, but I am registered under CASW, so I'm recognized Canada wide.

Now I wanted to go back to the comment that was made by one of our presenters earlier, Tom Simms, which was co-authored—this comment was co-authored by Shauna MacKinnon, who will be presenting tonight yet. In an article they—it was published in the *Winnipeg Free Press*, August 21st of this year, entitled, *Why certify social workers?* Licensing does little to raise—little to address the root cause of poverty and oppression.

Now the quote I've taken here is: while proponents argue that licensing service serves to protect clients, others question whether this is its central purpose. Critics argue that the main reason for licensing is to further legitimize social work as a profession. But the history of professionalism in other sectors indicates that such hierarchal organizations benefit professionals, not the service users, or, as I term, constituents.

Professionalism inevitably becomes self serving, as professionals tend to seek personal, social, economic and political power for themselves, and I grew up in a society just like that. The association of social workers has much to gain if licensing is put in place, including an estimated 900,000 per year for mandatory membership fees in exchange for the right to practise.

Now, with that, I would like to say that three years and eight months of straight university to obtain a Bachelor of social work degree, which has granted me the opportunity to serve the populations that I do, and in making a difference in their lives, including the promotion of self-empowerment, does not come from having a licence to practise, as recognized by any provincial legislating body, but more so from my own determination to obtain my degree and assist people to the best of my ability while upholding our code of ethics, as defined by the Canadian Association of Social Workers.

If I'm becoming a member of a provincial licensing body, I ask that they recognize the wide spectrum of social work practice, one that is inclusive of and embraces those who practise regardless of race, ethnicity, identity, cultural background, geographical location or otherwise, and not be one that merely upholds and enhances the status quo. Otherwise, should we be afforded the right to call ourselves social workers?

And, with that, I would like to propose that the bill be put on hold until further consultation is done with Aboriginal people, again, as defined under Canadian terminology: First Nations, Inuit and Métis people in communities, and with the larger body of social workers, who are not represented by the MASW. And I'd also like to just put the statement forward as well that equity tables that are inequitable. I've heard tonight that they talk about having a parallel system, or having one body that recognizes involvement and representation by First Nations, Inuit and Métis people. However, I do not wish to see what I've seen in many practices now, where we say we have equity and just societies, but where we have one person to fill the criteria in a body of seven. It does not create a just society, and it's not one that I would be prepared to advocate for or stand for, but I would rather stand against till we see equity for all peoples represented at the table.

With that I could say, *Aboriginal languages spoken. Translation unavailable.* Thank you very much. *Merci beaucoup.*

* (22:50)

Mr. Chairperson: Thank you very much for your presentation, Mr. McVicker. Questions for the presenter?

Mrs. Mitchelson: Thank you, Mr. McVicker, for your presentation, well thought out.

I don't have any questions at this point in time, but I think you've made it clear that you'd like to see the legislation held until meaningful consultation is done, and we've heard you. Thanks.

Mr. Chairperson: Mr. McVicker, did you wish to comment?

Mr. McVicker: I'd just like to say thank you for acknowledging those comments and, again, thank you for your kind comments, because this was put together very, very hastily within an hour today after only learning of this this past weekend. So I do appreciate that. Thank you.

Ms. Wowchuk: Thank you, Mr. McVicker. If you only put that together in a short time, you must be very talented, and I appreciate you taking the time to bring your thoughts to this committee this evening. Thanks.

Mr. McVicker: Thank you.

Mr. Chairperson: Any further questions or comments from committee members?

Seeing none, thank you very much, Mr. McVicker, for your patience and for your presentation.

The next presenter I have on the list is Elsie Flette, First Nations Southern Manitoba Child and Family Services Authority.

Good evening. Welcome. Thank you for your patience. Do you have a written presentation?

Ms. Elsie Flette (First Nations of Southern Manitoba Child and Family Services Authority): No, but I do have a copy I can leave.

Mr. Chairperson: Please. And we'll gather that from you at the end of your presentation then. Please proceed when you're ready.

Ms. Flette: Mr. Chairperson, Ms. Vice-Chairperson, committee members, thank you for the opportunity to be here. Hopefully, we can get through this. It's late.

I'm here as the chief executive officer of the First Nations of Southern Manitoba CFS Authority, and

I'm here speaking on behalf of the Southern Authority. And I'd like to say, first off, that we are opposed to Bill 9 as it currently stands.

Myself, I have a Bachelor of Social Work, a Master of Social Work. I've been involved in practising social work in the province of Manitoba since 1974, and most of that, almost all of that, with First Nations CFS.

I've been very closely involved, right from the outset, with the AJI-CWI process here in Manitoba and the devolution of child welfare, and I'd like to speak in that context with respect to this bill.

In spring of 2000, the Manitoba government signed a historic memorandum of understanding with the Aboriginal people in the province of Manitoba. This MOU led to the Aboriginal Justice Inquiry Child Welfare Initiative and the subsequent devolution of the child welfare system. This devolution was built on the principles that First Nation and Métis people have the right to care for their children. It recognized the right of the First Nation and Métis children and families to culturally appropriate services. AJI-CWI moved forward on the premise that a key way to exercise these rights was to give First Nation and Métis peoples control of the services provided to their children and their families.

AJI-CWI was committed to a partnership approach between government and First Nations and Métis people. Decisions were based on respect, using a consensus model right throughout the process. Throughout this time, we saw meaningful consultation take place when we looked at developing the CFS authorities act. That act was subsequently passed with all-party support.

We have not seen the same consultation afforded to us in this proposed legislation. The transfer of work and cases to Aboriginal agencies and authorities has now been completed under the AJI process, and the Aboriginal authorities and their agencies are in the process now of designing and implementing services and standards that are culturally congruent with the people that we serve.

However, now we are faced with legislation that will, if enacted as it currently stands, establish a non-Aboriginal body to determine who can work as a social worker within the First Nation and Métis Child and Family Services system. In our opinion, this is contrary to the spirit and the intent of AJI-CWI.

We know from history, we know from learning and we know from experience that the Eurocentric knowledge base on which mainstream social work practice is premised is not the only approach to helping. It has been the use of the Eurocentric approach, in fact, to the exclusion of traditional and indigenous knowledge and practice, which has motivated the Aboriginal community to establish Aboriginal and parallel child welfare systems.

Child welfare, currently, is one of the major employers of social workers in the province of Manitoba. With the AJI-CWI, one of our key objectives was to build an Aboriginal work force to work within CFS. An ever-increasing number of social workers now are Aboriginal. Within the First Nations of Southern Manitoba CFS Authority alone, we have close to 600 people working in what we call and believe to be social work positions.

Our '08-09 annual report notes the following information about the staff at the Southern Authority, the nine First Nations agency and ANCR that come under our umbrella. Within the Southern Authority, 91 percent of our staff are Aboriginal. Within our agencies, 83 percent of our staff are Aboriginal social workers, and within ANCR, right now, 40 percent.

We believe that MASW has not, to date, demonstrated that it has made conscious and consistent efforts to engage Aboriginal social workers in the debate about regulation and licensing and ongoing professional training.

Southern Authority met with MASW in October of '08, prior to the bill being tabled and received information about what was being proposed in the bill. MASW also then met at a meeting with our agency directors from the south and the Southern Authority, again, to provide us with information about what was being proposed in the bill.

In addition, standing committee, which is the four CEOs and the director of child welfare for the province, met with a representative of government again to go over what was in the bill. In all of those occasions we voiced our concerns about the proposed legislation. We are not opposed to standards. We are not opposed to education of our social workers. We are not opposed to qualifications that govern that. We are not opposed to regulating how those people do their work.

We are concerned about who has the power to define what is good social work, who has the power

to define what makes a good helper, who has the power to define what is good practice in our communities. We raised concerns about the impacts the legislation might have on our agencies and our ability to staff and hire people who are acceptable to our communities, who can engage our communities and who can work with our families.

We've not had any further dialogue since those meetings. We do not consider that meaningful consultation. There has been no assessment to determine the impact of such legislation on the Aboriginal child welfare system, or to determine, in fact, if there's support in the Aboriginal community for such legislation.

We like to note that the social workers are also employed in many of our First Nations communities with their employer being the First Nation chief and council. There's been no consultation that we are aware of that has occurred with them.

We are not so concerned about what is good for the profession of social work. It is my profession; it is the profession of many people that work in our system. We are more concerned about what is good for First Nations' children, our families, our communities and our Nations.

We note, too, that MASW, at this time, does not have adequate representation of Aboriginal social workers in leadership roles within the organization, and yet Bill 9 proposes to make this body the Manitoba College of Social Workers.

It concerns us that, without the voice of the Aboriginal community, there will continue to be mainstream and non-Aboriginal decision makers making critical decisions that will affect the services provided to our children and families. We do not believe that this is consistent with the spirit and intent of the AJI and the good efforts of this government to recognize the rights of Aboriginal people to culturally appropriate service. Nor do we believe that this government would have the progress made in devolving services to Aboriginal control now be set back by restrictions imposed by a non-Aboriginal professional body dictating who can, in fact, deliver these services.

We support the position that has been put forward by the Aboriginal Social Workers' Society, and would like to just add the following amendments that I think they've already mentioned: first of all, that in keeping with the spirit and intent of AJI-CWI and this government's demonstrated commitment to

Aboriginal control of services that affect their children, families and communities, that Bill 9, The Social Work Profession Act, include the establishment of an Aboriginal controlled college that would have legislated responsibility to regulate social workers that make up its membership; secondly, that fees paid by all social workers be used to fund both licensing body based on a negotiated and agreed upon funding arrangement; and, third, that prior to third and final reading of Bill 9, the government undertake to specifically seek input from the Aboriginal social workers, agencies, employers and organizations in the province of Manitoba.

Meegwetch and thank you for your time and attention.

* (23:00)

Mr. Chairperson: Thank you very much, Ms. Flette, for your presentation.

Questions to the presenter?

Mrs. Mitchelson: Thank you very much, Ms. Flette, for that presentation and for the overview and the background information you provided.

I guess my question to you would be, given that the Child and Family Services agencies are the major employers of social workers, do you find it a little strange that this legislation would fall under the Ministry of Finance rather than under the Ministry of Family Services and Housing?

Ms. Flette: Well, I had no hand in that, but—

Mrs. Mitchelson: But, again, there was an amendment that you just proposed that would see an independent college of Aboriginal social workers and, again, the question would be, do you think it might be beneficial—well, maybe I might ask the first question. Did you ever have an opportunity to discuss this legislation with the Minister of Family Services and Housing (Mr. Mackintosh)?

Ms. Flette: What we have discussed with the minister was our concern about the impact that this legislation might have and the need for us to look at that further and to really assess whether that is the appropriate way to go.

Mrs. Mitchelson: And I guess, then, if in fact this bill needs to be delayed—and it sounds like a lot of presenters have said there hasn't been meaningful consultation around the whole process of implementing some sort of regulatory body—and if it needs to have a bit more time, would it be, maybe,

your thought that this bill could be withdrawn at this point in time and maybe reintroduced under the Minister of Family Services and Housing that, certainly, I believe, would understand many of the issues that have been raised tonight at this committee—at these committee meetings?

Ms. Flette: Well, I certainly support the notion that the bill be delayed. I don't see any advantage, certainly not to anything within our sector, of proceeding with a bill that does not have the support of the Aboriginal community and that, in fact, has the potential to cause a lot of harm and a lot of chaos and a lot of animosity between groups, so I would definitely support that. In terms of who best introduced it, certainly it would make sense to fall under Family Services and Housing, given that many social workers are under there, but—

Mr. Lamoureux: Actually, it kind of sparked an interest on my part in terms of that line of questioning that Mrs. Mitchelson was asking in regards to have you met with the department, then, at all and, if so, would it have been the Department of Finance with the sponsoring minister, or would it have been with Family Services?

Ms. Flette: I believe the representative that met the standing committee came from the Minister of Finance's office.

Mr. Lamoureux: I don't—interesting point. The question I had for you was in regards to this whole, the college concept in terms of, if there was an amendment to the current legislation that guaranteed a percentage of the board of the college being of Aboriginal background, do you feel that that would assist in alleviating some of the concerns that you've expressed?

Ms. Flette: Well, I think it's important to recognize that Aboriginal people are not an interest group and should not be treated as such.

Secondly, I have had experience over the last 20 years, since we first signed the first tripartite agreement that established First Nations' agencies in attempting to create non-Aboriginal agencies that were more sensitive. And all kinds of processes were used, including putting Aboriginal people on the board, having initiatives to increase Aboriginal staff, but none of those were successful because the power doesn't shift. You can have some, you can have some voices at the table, but unless there's a real sharing of power, and we did not see that until we finally had AJI when, really, it was government who stepped in

and said you have to share some power. So I'm sceptical about processes that would put one or two people on the board and then somehow feel that that has addressed it.

I think, also, with the Child Welfare Initiative, we do have one legislation and we do have four authorities, and, while there's common ground between all of us and we do collaborate and co-operate on many issues, we are also charged with delivering services that particularly fit the communities that we work for. So I really don't see—I think there's already a model. I don't see a conflict or a big issue with establishing two separate colleges that work under the same legislation.

Mr. Lamoureux: If this legislation were to pass, would it be better to have it pass amended to incorporate representation from the Aboriginal community, or let it pass as is, in hopes that there would be other, something, sometime in the future?

Ms. Flette: Well, if you're asking me do we sign on and trust that things will happen, I would say I'm too sceptical for that. I would prefer to see it delayed, and have meaningful consultation, meaningful input. We certainly saw with AJI that that's possible, that all levels—the input came from leadership; it came from the service people; it came from the communities; and that's much preferable, and I think in the future, would serve us better than rushing into a bill that has a lot of flaws, in our opinion.

Ms. Wowchuk: Thank you, Ms. Flette, very much for your presentation, and sharing your views, and certainly you talked a lot about AJI, and the implementation of some of the recommendations there. I'm very proud of our government and the way that you've been able to deliver and work with you to establish the child care agencies that you are working in right now, and look forward to working with you as we move forward with this legislation, and take into consideration everything that's been suggested.

So thank you for being patient, and waiting this evening.

Mr. Chairperson: Thank you, Ms. Flette, thank you for your presentation.

Just for the information of committee members, we'll provide you with a copy of the presentation in a few moments.

Next presenter I have on the list is Neta Friesen, private citizen.

Good evening, Ms. Friesen. Welcome. Thank you for your patience.

For information of committee members, this is an additional presenter that was added late on the process, and so Ms. Friesen will make her presentation to the committee with your approval. Is it agreed to hear the presentation? *[Agreed]* Thank you.

Please proceed when you're ready.

Ms. Neta Friesen (Private Citizen): Thank you for the opportunity. Before I begin, did you know that it is a fact, or somewhere around a fact, that after about an hour and a half of speaking, you lose your ability to listen by 50 percent? Just crossed my mind while I was sitting there.

The other thing that I'd like to share with you is that I hate public speaking, but I also discovered the way to manage that: be so exhausted that you no longer care. So that is your little wake-up.

I am a social worker for 24 years. Sixteen of those are in child welfare; four of them with Aboriginal agencies, including a stint up north working on reserves for two, yeah, two or three of those years. Then I did a 10-year stint with a medical child abuse assessment unit in hospital, and now I have done four years as a school social worker, and do private practice.

I am here as a private member, but I am also a board member of MIRS, and I'm in support of the legislation for—the No. 1 reason for me is the need for competency, and for accountability, and protection of the public, but also for the social worker. And I say that because in my field I have seen many a good social worker end their careers badly due to burnout, which, for the most part, I would attribute to inadequate resources and inadequate education.

* (23:10)

So I graduated from social work in '85 and in '99. No, in '85 I graduated from social work and then I went back to school for my Master's 'cause I was doing child welfare, and in my role—that was when the government dispersed us to do community child welfare, and so there were different offices so that we could work more closely with communities. And in my role I had to do a lot of work that I wasn't trained to do, and I felt completely inadequate and did not feel I could serve my clients. And so, on my own buck, I went back for my Master's degree. I

worked full-time and attended school part-time, and I was lucky enough to have an employer that gave me some time off to do that, although most work was evening courses while doing this highly stressful child welfare job. And, you know, that's not normal practice, that employers would allow employees to go back to school to do that because they can't afford to be down a social worker, frankly, and there is no professional development money in the field of child welfare in particular. There is in the education field, and there is a little bit in the medical field. Having worked in them all, I can speak to that, but there isn't in the child welfare field.

So that is a bit of my background and a bit of my passion that I'm sharing with you as to how I think legislation can help in the licensing of social work, is for there to be more professional development to ensure competency. And that will then, in turn, protect the public.

Now, in terms of these questions that have been raised, many very good questions around cultural practice. Certainly it was included in my BSW degree. Certainly it was included in my Master's degree. So I know it's at the Faculty of Social Work at the University of Manitoba 'cause that's where I went, and then at the University of Winnipeg as well. And certainly there was some in the workplace, efforts to do that. Certainly, I know as a board member of MIRSWS that we are certainly in favour of cultural sensitive practice and that we would welcome, and I know it would be, the discussions have occurred at the board level, about there being ongoing professional development offered to ensure that that happens.

Social work code of ethics also shares the same values as some of the individuals that have presented that have opposed this bill, such as Professor Hart and Tom Simms: values of self-determination, challenging the status quo, recognition of cross-cultural practice, gender issues, inequalities, that there's many forms of knowledge, social control, justice issues, empowerment. The list goes on and on, and all of that was part of my training, and all of that were things that are focussed on in my work place in all the different places I've worked. So I don't see that we disagree on that. And this is where—and also the abuse of power, and that is one of the college's roles, which I very much welcome and feel passionate about is that we can address abuses of power, and when social work practice is not culturally sensitive, we would have the ability to address those concerns.

So I don't really see that we really disagree. I think some of this is misunderstanding, and that brings me to the point around the lack, apparent lack of consultation. I just find that entirely perplexing because, for instance, Mr. Tom Simms mentioned that there was no presentation at the Inner City Social Work faculty, but I was there witnessing it. So maybe there's a difference in views on what a consultation is because, indeed, the registrar, the executive director of our organization did do a PowerPoint presentation, but it's not that the presentation was just given and then we left and said, thanks, bye. We then invited feedback, and for people that weren't maybe comfortable sharing it there, we invited them to contact the organization, and throughout the years of my involvement on the organization—I don't even know how many it is now—maybe six, seven, I know that there have been diligent efforts made to invite representatives at the Aboriginal community, and I would like that to be known.

The details of all the presentations that our executive director have done are certainly available on a four-page document to you, but they involve all campuses, going up north, various organizations within the city, and so I think—not to say that there's not room for more consultation, but I think the impression's been left that there's been very little, and I would respectfully disagree and suggest to you that there's facts available for you to make your own decision. So thank you on that.

Then there's some comments made by Professor Frankel around the title of social work, and what competency requirements would look like, and for our organization not to be in charge of that. I think those are all interesting and good point questions. I think that this has arisen, the idea of allowing some grandfathering in, and some different combinations that have arisen out of our organization's desire to be inclusive, so that we don't want to just say that academics is all there is and that other things don't count. But, at the same time, just because you've been practising for 10, five years, you know, you might have been doing it wrong for 10 or five years. Doesn't mean you're good at it, and it doesn't mean that you're doing your job, based on empirical evidence of what is best practice, and that is the key to what social work is.

There's many other helping professions that do wonderful work that are not social workers trained in—by the Faculty of Social Work. But they are then not social workers. Social work is a body of

knowledge that is empirically tested, and it can be specialized in a gazillion different areas: child abuse and neglect, risk assessment, parent-child assessments, geriatrics, health care, grief and loss, death and dying, elderly, the list goes on and on, and you could study each one of those topics for your entire career and never, never know it all. So I think that's also important to be aware of.

Eurocentric is a word that's been used a lot tonight, and I would submit to you that there is nothing in the social work code of ethics that would reinforce a Eurocentric way of practising social work. Everything about the code of ethics of social work—and what I'm most proud to be a social worker for—is because of our belief in the self-determination of the client. Not to say that there aren't systems' abuses in the past, but our code of ethics, if there was a way to implement it through a college and have practice reviewed, there are checks and balances for that. Right now there's none, absolutely none. Right now the only recourse a client has if they feel they've been—there's been abuse of power or there—they haven't been well served, they feel their social worker doesn't have the appropriate training, is to go to that individual's supervisor or perhaps call the Minister of Family Services (Mr. Mackintosh).

It has also been suggested that social work is not linear, but that rather it is relationship based, and, again, I agree, that's true. So I don't think there's disagreement here, but it is still based on an empirical body of evidence that is found in textbooks based on years and years and years of research. So how important it is because of the ever-changing nature of the field with new research, how important it is for ongoing professional development to stay current? Your social work degree from 1963 is not relevant in 2010, and I would suggest that there isn't a person that has been in this room tonight that would want to go see a doctor who hadn't cracked open a book since they graduated in '63. Thus, it is the same for social work.

Again, it is—it has lots of rich roots in community development, and it's not all about academics, but certain areas of specialized knowledge do involve a great deal of expertise. And I would suggest to you one example would be the very complex field of assessing risk in families where there's been child abuse and neglect. If you don't know how to do that accurately, children die. If you don't know how to determine when a child should be removed from their home and whether it

should be temporary and when it becomes permanent—when should it become permanent so that the child can develop an attachment with another family? If you don't know things like that, you can't really make an accurate decision in intervention.

And, finally, with respect to representation on the board, there isn't an MIRSW member that would not welcome representation from all groups in our community, and I know that that invitation has been extended on numerous times over the years. So it is not that we have been only seeking to fulfil our board and our obligations with people that are currently members of our organization. That is not the case.

If certain groups were missed, it certainly was not deliberate. And, you know, there's thousands of organizations and so it's difficult maybe to get to all. And I think there's also a bit of a sense—a little bit of conflict for us because our 900 members have made it clear at our annual general meetings that they are in favour of this, and we have a mandate to fulfil what they direct us to do. And people who aren't members maybe don't have the vehicles through which we communicate, like our monthly newsletter, et cetera. So then, some of them wouldn't get that information.

But, again, to go back to some of the individuals that indicated they weren't given the information, you know, there clearly was bulletins put out at the inner-city youth campus and notification, and Tom Simms was there, as was Professor Hart.

* (23:20)

So, in closing, I would like to submit to you that the only danger here is the divisive language such as that which was made by Tom Simms, where he drew the analogy between the MIRSW and the white moderate social worker and the Ku Klux Klan. I think that is the greatest tragedy of what has happened here tonight.

And my goal is for there to be unity and one organization where all of us—because I believe we all became social workers for the same reason and for the same passions, and I would like us all to work together. And I know that I speak that portion, I speak on behalf of the MIRSW board. Thank you.

Mr. Chairperson: Thank you, Ms. Friesen, for your presentation.

Questions for the presenter.

Mrs. Mitchelson: I thank you, Ms. Friesen, for your—for your presentation. You articulated very well and clarified some points, I think, for us tonight with your presentation.

I know that I've asked other members that have supported the legislation whether they'd be amenable to an amendment that would include that the Faculty of Social Work—and I think everyone has agreed to that—but I just want to say thank you. I don't have any specific questions, but I appreciated your presentation.

Ms. Wowchuk: Ms. Friesen, thank you for being patient. I know you've heard—I think you were here for almost all of the presentations, and certainly you reflected on some of them in your comments, but I want to thank you, especially for clarifying some of the comments that were made earlier and you had the opportunity to outline where consultation had taken place. And I appreciate your comments and the work you've been doing.

Mr. Chairperson: Ms. Friesen, did you wish to comment?

Ms. Friesen: Just maybe as a closing note. You know how there's always these jokes made about City of Winnipeg employees and government employees, of which, you know, I was one for most of my career, and so I always resented them. And I would just like to say that here's another example of how hardworking government employees are. I mean, how many hours have you been sitting here? I don't know about you, but I have a numb bum.

Thank you. Thank you for trying to continue listening. Thank you for listening after this many hours. I know that must be extremely difficult, and probably painful by now.

Mr. Chairperson: Thank you, Ms. Friesen, for your presentation and your patience.

We'll now proceed to second call. John Chudzik, who had been called once already.

Good evening, sir. Welcome. Do you have a written presentation? Give us a moment to distribute and we'll give you the signal to proceed.

Please proceed, Mr. Chudzik.

Mr. John Chudzik (Private Citizen): Now, I thank you for staying up to this ungodly hour. I wish to speak in support of Bill 9, The Social Work Profession Act, which has been put forward by MASW-MIRSW.

I've had the privilege to become a social worker, continuously involved in child welfare in Manitoba for a period of, well, almost 50 years, dating back to 1960 when I began employment with the Children's Aid Society of Western Manitoba. In 1967, I graduated cum laude from one of the finest schools in Canada, St. Patrick's School of Social Welfare in Ottawa, which was then affiliated with the University of Ottawa.

I've always been proud to carry the title of professional social worker and to be a member of our provincial association. My experience has taken me from a front-line worker to a supervisor for 17 years, to the position of provincial program coordinator for child protection and child abuse for almost 20 years. And since my retirement, I have been active as a consultant.

From the outset, my experiences included extensive involvement with First Nation agencies and staff from being one of the first social workers to work in reserve communities—starting off with Sioux Valley—to being directly involved as a supervisor with central Manitoba in the creation of and the eventual transfer of the mandate and authority to Dakota Ojibway Child and Family Services.

For almost 20 years, in my role as a provincial program co-ordinator, I was involved with every Child and Family Service agency in Manitoba, including all the First Nation agencies, in all aspects of child protection and child abuse, including child deaths, from direct case consultation, program implementation, development of province-wide and on-site training. I believe all of those who know me know that I've always supported a community-based team approach, working directly with local agencies and their staff.

As a long-time member of the Manitoba Association of Social Workers, I've had the privilege to serve as president and as a member of the CAS board of directors for almost eight years and as treasurer for the CASW. This has also included involvement with the International Federation of Social Workers—or social work.

I would add, for the past three years, I was appointed as a honorary historian with the Provincial Advisory Committee on Child Abuse, which is the acronym of PACCA, which I had been involved in for a good 20 years before.

As already has been noted, MASW is also a member of the Canadian Association of Social

Workers, which is part of a world-wide International Federation of Social Workers. As such, it is governed by the *International Declaration of Ethical Principles of Social Work*, both in 1994 and 2004, which requires that members of CASW uphold the values and principles established by both CASW and the IFSW. In Canada, each province and territory is responsible for regulating the professional conduct of social workers to ensure protection of the public.

It might be surprising to learn that, until Bill 9 was introduced, Manitoba was the only agency in—or only province in Canada which did not have legislation which would protect the title of social worker.

Four years ago, when I was working on the Turner investigative review with Dr. Peter Markesteyn in Newfoundland, I was amazed to learn that, not only did the Newfoundland and Labrador Association of Social Workers have such legislation, almost all social workers employed by the Department of Children, Youth and Families were, at minimum, BSWs, if not MSWs. Professional social workers were constantly in the process of upgrading their knowledge and practice base beyond what their respective employers required or provided in training and orientation. Such requirements exist in every province except Manitoba.

There's no question that for decades the profession of social work has been one of the most vital and integral parts of all social service organizations in this province, but especially child welfare. Today's social worker is facing increasingly complex and challenging issues. As already noted, these challenges are compounded with heavy caseloads, the lack of quality supervision and the logistics of providing services. Many child welfare staff, including professional social workers, are overwhelmed with the pressures of trying to deliver quality services.

Workers in many First Nation agencies face some of the most difficult and complex cases in the system, cases which challenge even the most experienced and knowledgeable social work professionals.

But, from my experience, services suffer severely when staff do not have the basic—the most basic knowledge, lack fundamental competencies or fail to have to have access to proper supervision. Both children and families are put at risk.

* (23:30)

Becoming a graduate social worker requires an extensive knowledge base, rigorous training and direction of experienced faculty and field staff. It is simply too time-consuming and ineffective to be limited to on-the-job training.

Ideally, having more professional Aboriginal social workers is part of the answers, but I would remind you that child and family service agencies, however, cannot be blamed for all of the housing, poverty, economic and resource issues. Far too often these agencies are left with the failures of many other systems. I would add that it's also extremely painful, devastating and demoralizing when such workers face public criticism and blame in spite of their good intentions, dedication, and hard work. Such public criticism and censure reflects on all social work practice.

All professional social workers should be committed to upholding such core values as respect for inherent dignity, and the worth of persons, the pursuit of social justice, service to humanity, and the integrity of professional practice, confidentiality, and competence in professional practice. When social workers are doing what's required within professional standards they deserve to be protected and not scapegoated. I believe that regulation should also serve as a—this regulation should serve as a catalyst and call for advocacy, for reaching out and speaking up collectively for our social work colleagues.

In that respect, the overall standard of social work practice must also improve. Like other key professions, such as physicians, nurses, psychologists and lawyers, if social workers want legislative protection of their title as professionals they must continue to demonstrate that they deserve it. They need to know that their profession association is there for them.

Contrary to some earlier statements made in second reading, I believe that Bill 9 will be extremely important in defining and raising a more consistent province-wide standard of practice while providing a legislative vehicle for professional and public accountability. It will serve as a critical catalyst for more meaningful dialogue. In essence, it will mean: that this province will be entitled to services provided by regulated professionals; that relevant and continuing educating models will be developed where professionals are required to achieve a certain number of units of training for

licensing renewal; that professional regulations should create a process for developing a more consistent knowledge base amongst social workers, students, agencies and the faculty; that it will serve as a basis for defining best practices through the adherence of educational credentials and the ongoing development of professional standards, values and code of ethics; and, finally, that there will be a clear process for professional and public accountability amongst all who carry the title of social worker.

People resist change because it means facing new challenges. I do not anticipate that change will come easily. It will require the commitment and hard work of every social worker. Having the privilege of being a professional social worker has its responsibilities and obligations. It means taking on the responsibility to provide ethical, competent and professional practice, and being fully accountable for your practice.

I believe there must be a clear unifying, central authority, otherwise both responsibility and accountability will continue to suffer. The experience of other provinces has been that there has been significant improvement, not just in the overall quality of practice, but in the relationship between social workers, agencies and the faculty.

The challenge in Manitoba will be—are we willing to make it work?

I would disagree with those who wish to create an alternate college with the fear that it might become or would become discriminatory and result in even greater divisions and disagreement, resulting in a potentially different class and definition of social worker. It would seem to me that there will be plenty of opportunity for collaboration and for ensuring that the issues involving First Nation workers are integrated into the registration process.

I'm equally concerned that social workers who are not Aboriginal or First Nations must have exposure and be required to develop a greater knowledge and understanding of cultural issues, problems and demands facing First Nations and Métis communities and urban—and the urban neighbourhood. You cannot—you simply cannot be expected to provide such services without understanding those real issues.

Social work practice has always involved assisting some of the most vulnerable people in our society. From my experience, this is particularly evident in the provision of child and family services,

especially to abused and exploited children and to families in turmoil. It should be a system where the finest, most experienced and competent professional social workers are hired. The most effective organizations are those which create a climate conducive to both professional and personal growth.

I believe the proclamation of The Social Work Profession Act is long overdue, not only in protecting social workers but, in particular, enforcing the social work code of ethics and upholding standards of practice for our profession. The legislation will enable social workers in Manitoba to work towards a process to self-regulate the profession through the college. I believe that it will also serve as a catalyst to improve the overall standards of social work practice to create a more meaningful dialogue and to ensure both professional and public accountability.

I thank you for having the opportunity to present this to you.

Mr. Chairperson: Thank you very much, Mr. Chudzik, for your presentation.

Questions for the presenter.

Mr. Derkach: I just want to say thank you very much for your presentation, Mr. Chudzik, and thank you for the many years of service that you have given to this profession. And certainly your views are valued, as a long-standing member and a professional, so thank you very much for your presentation.

Ms. Wowchuk: Thank you, Mr. Chudzik, and congratulations on some of your appointments and for the work that you have done for the betterment of children in this province and for the comments that you've made this evening. Appreciate them.

Mr. Lamoureux: I just wanted to pick up on your experience and pose a question I've asked others in regard to, do you see a problem or, in fact, would you recommend to the minister that there should be some sort of an allocation on the college to ensure that there is Aboriginal representation? Is that something—I'd just be interested in your opinion on that.

Mr. Chudzik: Well, I've listened carefully to particularly what Ms. Flette has said and I really do think there are merits in what she is proposing. I guess, personally, as a matter of principle, I have always difficulty when you start dividing central

authority and governance, but I do agree that, in the process of devolution—and it's something that I've worked towards and seen as a very important, you know, involvement in Child and Family Services—that there's no question that First Nation agencies have been providing much better and effective services since that process began. And I think my recommendation would be that, if there is going to be further consultation, that one of the areas that be weighed and looked at very carefully are, you know, some of the disadvantages of having that, but I do not want to minimize the advantages of that.

* (23:40)

I've seen in my experience that social workers who—*[interjection]*—I know that wasn't for me, but—that social workers who have been delivering service to First Nation families and children, I've often been appalled that many have never been to a reserve, have never taken the opportunity to learn and to understand the culture, to understand the kinds of resources that exist, that often that's happened in isolation. And I think that, you know, one of the ongoing processes that must take place is that, you know, as social workers we need to be familiar and kept abreast of that.

And, certainly, one of the key learning experiences for me as a professional has been my work with First Nations' agencies and the culture. I think that, you know, some of my most important professional growth has taken place as a result of that experience. So I think that, you know, somehow, you know, I guess my personal approach is how can we work this together to make it better so that both end up in a win-win position, rather than a we-they position? 'Cause I think, then, both the proposal—the legislation that's being proposed will suffer because there will be people in disagreement, and I think that also there'll be this danger of what that does to Aboriginal or First Nation social workers too.

Mr. Chairperson: Thank you very much, Mr. Chudzik, for your presentation this evening.

Mr. Chudzik: Thank you, for the opportunity.

Mr. Chairperson: You're welcome.

The next person I have for second call is Shauna MacKinnon.

Shauna MacKinnon, welcome. Do you have a written pres—oh, you've got it, okay, yes. Please proceed when you're ready.

Ms. Shauna MacKinnon (Private Citizen): Like everyone else, I'm here to express my concerns with Bill 9, and I think I'm the last person, so people can perk up because you get to go home after me.

I'd like to begin by saying how unfortunate it is that this bill has created so much division among social workers. I believe that much of this would've been avoided had the MASW-MIRSW more openly engaged the social work community in the process. As social workers, the MASW-MIRSW—I'm just going to say MASW because that's a bit of a tongue twister, although we all know there's some separation—the MASW would know that consultation requires more than having a few forums to provide information to people. You've heard from many people here this evening; it requires an openness to hear concerns and address them in a meaningful way. And I've had some personal experience that I'll talk about a little bit tonight in terms of how I feel that that's not happening.

The first example is Tom Simms, Michael Hart and myself requested a meeting with MASW director and board in the summer to discuss our concerns—which they were quite aware of—about Bill 9, and to see if we could find some common ground, and our request was denied.

So, for the record, I'm a social worker with the MASW and I'm currently completing a Ph.D. I'm not and I have no intentions of becoming licensed with the MIRSW. My social work practice has been at the community level as an activist and as a social researcher, and committed to social justice. I believe that I am accountable to the community that I serve, rather than my social work peers that may or may not share my values and concerns for social justice.

I personally have nothing to gain or lose by this bill. I'm here to present my concerns about the broader implications and to suggest some revisions that I believe would improve the bill. So my concerns are about the process and the content of the bill as other people have raised, but I also have some concerns with the body that will be the college. So I just want to talk a little bit about those through my presentation as well.

The MASW has long worked to have mandatory licensing place, of some 10 years, I believe. The association Web site I was looking at, and it describes the association as the voice of the social work profession. They say they provide peer support and connect people with social workers across

Canada. They educate members as well as the public and are at the forefront of the profession through advocacy and social action.

The most recent annual report that I could see on the Web site showed some 691 members that are currently licensed, but it's also important to note that, within the membership, not everybody is supportive of licensing. Some are licensed because their workplaces currently require that they be, and there's others like myself who are members who have made a conscious decision not to license. So it remains unclear exactly how many members are in support of mandatory licensing. You've heard from some of those this evening.

The reality is that, as you heard again here tonight, social work is a very diverse field. There has long been a divide between social workers who would like to move the discipline further into the professional realm and those who feel it should remain more closely connected to its activist roots.

There's a long list of progressive social work practitioners and theorists that argue that the culture of professionalism, which is the central starting point for those who agree or advocate for licensing, and it benefits professionals more than it does service users. So the MASW position on licensing reflects a particular view that is not shared by all social workers and I think it's important for people to remember that.

Going back to the Web site and how they define the organization, they go on to explain that the MIRSWS is the regulatory arm of the profession and this is where things get confusing for me. While there appears to be two distinct roles—so you have the MASW as the advocate educator and you have the MIRSWS as a licensing body but they're both governed by one board. And as the board readily admits, the primary activity of the organization has been on moving this legislation forward. So this is important to note because it appears that the stated role of the MASW has been lost. There really hasn't been any public education and social engagement and advocacy. And I'm concerned that if Bill 9 passes as it stands, under the current structure and leadership, this is unlikely to change.

So I'll just go over a few things that I'm concerned about. First, I'd like to note that there's been an unwillingness of the management of the MASW, in my experience, to allow for open dialogue and input into Bill 9 and this has led me to

be very concerned about this becoming the body that then becomes the College of Social Workers.

I joined the association in the spring, very recently, just with the hope of encouraging the organization to become more actively involved in social justice issues which I believe are critical, important to social workers. I've longed criticized the MASW for their lack of involvement but I'd hoped to push them a little bit further. I had a few meetings with MASW staff but it clearly—it became very clear to me that what their priority has been is this legislation and that is what they're focused on right now.

I feel strongly that if a College of Social Workers is to be implemented, there needs to be a clear governance structure that ensures that there's some separation between these two entities and there should be a wide representation from community, academia and practitioners in a range of practise areas, and people talked about some of that here this evening. There needs to be more diversity so that policies, procedures and mandates can be developed by those who represent a broad sector in social work practise, education and policy areas as well as client and community groups. It's not good enough to have representation as it currently sits and stands in the proposed legislation based on geographic region and, I think, one student they note.

As I noted earlier, the MASW doesn't speak for all social workers. The membership, as it appears to me, to be about a quarter of the number of practising social workers. They've not been actively involved in advocacy efforts and I think the leadership would readily admit that. They would argue that licensing will allow them to get more involved as they will have greater funds to dedicate to social justice issues. But there's nothing in the legislation to ensure this and, quite frankly, the manner in which MASW has handled this current situation leaves me with little confidence that anything will change with the existing leadership.

So tonight you have heard the MASW say that they have consulted extensively with the community but the nature and extent of these consultations remains a mystery. I do know for certain, from my experience, that the MASW have ignored concerns that have been raised and they have suppressed dialogue and this is a huge concern for me.

One example is a recent refusal of the executive to meet to discuss concerns raised in an article

written by myself and Tom Simms that was circulated broadly and later printed in the *Winnipeg Free Press*. It would be of interest to this committee to know that this article was broadly circulated after the MASW declined to print it in their newsletter prior to the passing of the legislation. Although the MASW invited us in December of 2008 to write an article for their newsletter, to present an alternative view on licensing, it had not yet been published seven months later. I contacted the director in mid-July to inquire the status of this article and I was advised that the article would be published in the fall 2009 newsletter. I expressed concerns that printing the article in the fall would be too late to inform the debate because it would be after the legislation had gone through second reading. I'm sure you would all agree that there's little point in trying to inform the debate after the legislation is passed, so. But, nonetheless, we were assured that it was completely coincidental that our article would not be in print until after legislation had passed.

* (23:50)

It would also be of interest to this committee to know that, in July 2009, Tom Simms and I received an e-mail from the editor of the newsletter stating the following, and I think it's important for you to hear what was in the contents of this e-mail from the editor of the newsletter, and so I quote: I wanted to take a moment to let you both know that the article that you submitted on legislation, in response to our request, will not be included in the June edition of the newsletter. I am deeply embarrassed and disappointed by this situation and I would like to extend my sincerest apologies to the both of you.

The editor went on to say that, in June, the editorial committee received written direction from the board executive to refrain from including in this newsletter any written submissions that expressed oppositional and dissenting opinions regarding the legislation or the development of the College of Social Workers. It went on to state that—the direction from the executive—that, at this—said: that, at this sensitive time in the progress of the legislation, publication of opposing opinions in the official newsletter of the organization would be contrary to the strategic goals and aims of the organization. It would risk undermining the achievement of successful passage. And they went on to state that when the content for the newsletter had been developed and they wanted it to be approved by the executive committee.

So I believe that this is—information is important for this committee because it explains why people like myself have a critical—are critical of this process. If this is how the MASW consults with and allows for public education and dialogue and debate among social workers on an issue of critical importance, not only to the MASW members but also to the social work community at large.

So I'm just quickly going to point on a few comments on—points on the legislation that I have issues with, and then I'll sum up.

So there's three main arguments that the legislation seems to put forward as they propose registration or see a value of registration, and that is, again, people have commented on this this evening: first, to ensure that social workers meet some basic education requirements; to ensure that they are actively engaging in ongoing professional development, and to provide a mechanism for the public and peers to report social workers for misconduct or unfitness of practice.

The MASW argues that we need to ensure that standards are in place for social workers and that they remain competent as defined by the college who, they argue, would be a panel of social work peers.

I don't disagree, of course, with the need for competence, but I don't agree that a College of Social Workers is required to decide who is competent and what they need to do to continue their competence. I'd like to point out that the majority of social workers are employed with government or non-government agencies that provide ongoing education and professional development specific to their areas of practice.

I would argue that the only social workers for which there might be concern would be those in private practice and perhaps—there's a very small number of those—but perhaps licensing would be appropriate for them.

I would also argue that the MASW is not best placed to make decisions of what is appropriate training. Organizations employing social workers will know better what skills and education their workers require.

Much of the act focusses on outlining a formal process for registering complaints about social workers who may be negligent. I would argue that there's already processes in place. Again, since the

majority of social workers work for non-government or government organizations, complaints can be made through the channels that exist within those organizations, and so I don't agree with it that this extra layer is necessary.

Mr. Chairperson: Ms. MacKinnon, I must stop you at this point 'cause we're considerably over the amount of time that we've allowed for the presentations.

Ms. MacKinnon: Okay. Could I just make one last point?

Mr. Chairperson: Very, very brief.

Ms. MacKinnon: I just wanted to echo that I had already—that what's been said about Aboriginal social work. So, obviously, I agree with that, in the spirit of devolution of child welfare responsibility, we need to recognize the Aboriginal social workers.

So, at the very least, I urge the standing committee to amend the legislation as we've all talked today. We've got several recommendations that several of us have put forward that I support and I urge the committee to consider those amendments. Thank you.

Mr. Chairperson: Thank you for your presentation. Questions for the presenter?

Mr. Derkach: Mr. Chair, I'm wondering whether or not it would be admissible to have the presenter's comments that weren't completed recorded in *Hansard* as written.

Mr. Chairperson: Is it the will of the committee to have the presentation that you had before committee members appear in the *Hansard* of these proceedings? *[Agreed]* Thank you. It will appear in the recorded version, Ms. MacKinnon.

Ms. MacKinnon: Thank you.

Mrs. Mitchelson: Thanks very much for your presentation.

My one question would be, did you have an opportunity to meet with the minister that sponsored this bill to express your concerns prior to tonight's—

Floor Comment: No, we haven't talked to—

Mr. Chairperson: Ms. MacKinnon, I have to recognize you for the recorder to turn on your microphone.

Ms. MacKinnon: Sorry, sorry. It's five to 12.

Mr. Chairperson: Did you wish to respond?

Ms. MacKinnon: Yeah. No, we didn't meet with the minister to discuss the legislation. We had no contact with anyone until today.

Mr. Chairperson: Any further comments, questions? Seeing none, thank you very much, Ms. MacKinnon, for your presentation.

Ms. MacKinnon: Thank you.

Mr. Chairperson: The next—I have two more second call folks, but before I do that, it's close to the hour of midnight and we're nearing the end of the list and may, in fact, unless there's other presenters here, may be at the end of the list.

What's the will of the committee with respect to the sitting times? Do you wish to proceed to hear all of the presenters that are here this evening? *[Agreed]*

All right, we'll proceed then.

The next person to call for second call is Ken Mackenzie who had previously dropped to the bottom of the list. Is Ken Mackenzie here this evening? Ken Mackenzie for a final time. Ken Mackenzie's name will be dropped from the list.

The last person I have on my list for second call is Lawrence Dean. Lawrence Dean. Lawrence Dean's name will be dropped from the list for second call.

Are there any additional folks with us here this evening who may wish to make a presentation whose name did not appear on the list? Seeing none, is it the will of the committee to conclude public presentations on both bills 4 and 9? *[Agreed]* Thank you.

Bill 4—The Community Revitalization Tax Increment Financing Act

Mr. Chairperson: Is it the will of the committee to proceed with clause-by-clause consideration starting with Bill 4? *[Agreed]* Thank you.

Does the honourable minister for Bill 4 have an opening statement?

Hon. Ron Lemieux (Minister of Inter-governmental Affairs): Just brief. Well, first of all, thank you to all the presenters that came today and also to all the staff that have been here since 6 o'clock and have stayed with us right through. Much appreciated to *Hansard* staff and others. I think that's important to put on the record.

Tax increment financing, essentially we're here because at the request of Winnipeg, Brandon, CentreVenture and others that the Province introduced this legislation and TIF is a key component in the development of the inland port, affordable housing, and rapid transit. So, with that, I just want to say thank you to all who presented once again. Thank you.

Mr. Chairperson: I thank the honourable minister.

Does the critic responsible for the official opposition have an opening statement.

* (00:00)

Mr. Stuart Briese (Ste. Rose): I, too, would like to thank the presenters that showed up to speak on Bill 4, the incremental tax bill. We clearly heard from those presenters that there were some concerns around accountability and around defined zones, and I think pretty near all of them—at least four out of the five presenters—were—talked about a but-for clause which says, would this development have happened if there was no TIF. And they certainly appeared to feel that defined zones would be more in order on this bill.

This bill is clearly a form of debt financing. It's borrowing money and paying it off long-term on—with some money that's coming out of property taxes—that is school property tax. It is a raid on property tax, there's no doubt about that, and it's probably going to produce a slush fund for a minister to administer.

The bill is very clearly going to take property tax that should be dedicated to the education of children to stimulate development, and in my view, that stimulus should only be provided by the municipal tax on property or the provincial or federal government from general revenues to stimulate development. I don't believe the school tax should be ever used to stimulate development. It's needed in the education areas, and I fundamentally don't support this bill.

With that, we're ready to go clause by clause. I hope the—I hope the minister will entertain some of the comments that came out of the committee presentations tonight and consider some amendments, probably at report stage. Thank you.

Mr. Chairperson: Thank the critic for the official opposition for the opening statement.

During the consideration of a bill, the table of contents, the enacting clause and the title are

postponed until all other clauses have been considered in their proper order. Also, if there is agreement from this committee, the Chair will call clauses in blocks that conform to pages, with the understanding that we will stop at any particular clause or clauses where members have comments or questions or amendments to propose. Is that agreed? *[Agreed]*

Thank you. We'll now proceed with clause-by-clause consideration of Bill 4.

Clause 1—pass; clause 2—pass; clauses 3 through 5—pass; clauses 6 through 8—pass; clause 9—pass; clauses 10 and 11—pass; clauses 12 through 15—pass; clause 16—pass; clauses 17 and 18—pass; clause 19—pass; clauses 20 and 21—pass; table of contents—pass; enacting clause—pass; title—pass.

Shall the bill be reported?

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Inkster): I just have one question for the minister. Can the minister indicate, or just provide me clarification, in order to establish a TIF, can the minister do it with the objection of any municipality or the City of Winnipeg?

Mr. Lemieux: Yes, I've been advised that that there's a provision here that, before recommending the designation of a property as a community revitalization property, the minister must consult with the council of the municipality and the school board of the school division in which the property's located first.

Mr. Chairperson: Any questions on this point?

Bill be reported.

Thank you, members of the committee. That concludes the business on Bill 4.

Bill 9—The Social Work Profession Act

Mr. Chairperson: We'll now proceed with clause-by-clause consideration of Bill 9, The Social Work Profession Act.

Hon. Rosann Wowchuk (Minister of Finance): Mr. Chairman, it is quite late, but I would like to take this opportunity to thank all of those who presented, and for the committee for participating in the discussion on this bill. But I just want to make a few comments in that informing the committee and the people who are here is that every province in Canada provides legislation for the self-regulation of social workers, except Manitoba.

As it stands now, a social worker can choose to register or not register with the Manitoba Association of Social Workers and the Manitoba Institute of Registered Social Workers, which is governed by a very old act that was a private statute from 1996. And really right now anybody under the current act, anyone can advertise and promote themselves as a social worker, regardless of what kind of training they have, and this is different than other provinces. This will change with Bill 9.

Under this act, the bill, the 1996 act will be repealed, and the two associations that I mentioned will become the Manitoba College of Social Workers, that we heard a lot of discussion about this evening. And, under the proposed act, the person can hold themselves out to be a social worker in Manitoba only if they follow standards of practices and codes of ethics as is required by social workers in other provinces.

This is really about protecting the public from harm, and under this bill there are several protections and obligations on the college that are being put in place, and one of the really interesting ones is that they will be required to maintain a registry of social workers and students. The board are both—there are specific qualifications that will be set out under this regulation. But one of the things that I want to mention is very important, Mr. Chairman, is that under—Bill 9 is very timely as it creates a profession that will fall under the ambit and required recent amended chapter 7 respecting labour mobility on the agreement on internal trade, and allows for the recognition of Manitoba social workers in other provinces, and recognizes—and the recognition of social workers is from other provinces coming into Manitoba.

And this will certainly enhance mobility of students who graduate. We heard someone say this evening that they wouldn't want to register, or they might want to work in another province. This will give them the mobility that we need.

And, with those few comments, Mr. Chairman, I'm going to leave the rest of my comments for third reading and like to move forward with the passage of the bill and one amendment.

Mr. Chairperson: We thank the honourable minister for the opening statement.

Does the critic for the official opposition have an opening statement?

Mrs. Bonnie Mitchelson (River East): Yes, thank you very much, Mr. Chair, and I guess I was somewhat disturbed as we listened to presentations tonight, and I saw some of the comments that were made about the MASW and their role in their legislation, and you know, government has created the situation and the issue. This isn't MASW's legislation. This is government legislation. It's the Minister of Finance that introduced it, and here we've got presenters out there attacking MASW.

*(00:10)

It's the government that supported the legislation. It may have been MASW that wanted and would like to have the legislation implemented, but they can't introduce legislation. It has to be the government that sponsors legislation on behalf of organizations. And when government sponsors legislation, it's a Cabinet decision, and every member around that Cabinet table would have had input or approval into that legislation.

So we now have legislation, we have community organizations out there that are fighting and blaming MASW for this legislation when it's not their legislation, it's government, and the issues should be articulated to government and to this minister.

And, you know, again, we heard some very credible presentations, I think, from many members of society, on all sides of this issue, and there's more than two, even. There's different—there's different issues, one raised by the profession and the Faculty of Social Work, that feels very strongly about qualifications and academic qualifications. And then there's the other side of the issue that indicates that there should have been more consultation and more Aboriginal input into the legislation.

All very valid points, I think, but very compelling for me, and I had asked the question of the minister, and maybe she could try to explain for me, tonight, what she perceives the rationale would be to continue having the Ministry of Finance sponsor this legislation.

First of all, we don't have—and it's unfortunate, quite frankly, that—because I had a briefing from the Minister of Finance, who is a former social worker, and he took me through some of the changes, but he's not here with his expertise and understanding of social work, as a former social worker. And I would've loved to have been able to ask him questions. I could certainly ask this minister why she

would have brought forth legislation—[interjection] Well, the minister says this isn't question period. We have every right as opposition to ask questions of the minister about clarification of the legislation, so, you know, and if she can't answer questions and defend her legislation, then that is another reason why this minister shouldn't be bringing in this kind of legislation.

Anyway, I would like to ask the minister if she can explain to us why Cabinet didn't review in detail the kinds of information that were brought forward at committee tonight. There's certainly controversy around this legislation, and I'm wondering why there wasn't more insight around the Cabinet table into some of the controversy that would've been presented here tonight, and why this legislation would've been introduced knowing that there was this much opposition to the legislation as it was drafted. And maybe she could explain, and I'm sure that she's been briefed on the issue.

Mr. Chairperson: Does that conclude the comments of the honourable member?

Mrs. Mitchelson: I've asked a question of the minister.

Mr. Chairperson: I thank the honourable critic for the official opposition for the opening comments.

Ms. Wowchuk: Mr. Chairman, the member for—Ms. Mitchelson, member for River East, has implied that this is all negative. And if you look at all—if you look at all of the discussion this evening, there was a lot of comments on both sides of the issue.

Point of Order

Mr. Chairperson: Mr. Derkach, on a point of order.

Mr. Leonard Derkach (Russell): I don't want to get into an argument tonight, but the minister has to be fair—the minister has to be fair. I was listening carefully to the member from River East and to the comments that she was making, and she acknowledged that there were, not only two sides to this argument but, indeed, there were comments on more than just two sides. So she certainly was acknowledging the presentations that were made in their—in their form, and the minister shouldn't put on the record that the member from River East was negative and only heard the negative comments, because that's not fair.

Mr. Chairperson: With regard to the point of order raised by Mr. Derkach, the Chair must rule, with the

greatest respect, that it's a dispute over the facts. Therefore, there is no point of order.

* * *

Mr. Chairperson: Committee ready to proceed? We'll proceed with clause by clause.

During the consideration of a bill, the table of contents, the enacting clause and the title are postponed until all other clauses have been considered in their proper order.

Also, if there is agreement from the committee, the Chair will call clauses in blocks that conform to pages with the understanding that we will stop at any particular clause or clauses where members have comments, questions or amendments to propose.

Is that agreed? [Agreed]

Thank you. I would now proceed with clause by clause.

Clause 1—pass; clauses 2 and 3—pass; clause 4—pass; clauses 5 and 6—pass; clauses 7 and 8—pass; clause 9—pass.

Shall clause 10 pass?

Ms. Wowchuk: Mr. Chairman, I have an amendment on clause 10. I move

THAT Clause 10(1)(a) of the Bill be amended by striking out "or" at the end of subclause (ii), and add "or" at the end of subclause (iii) and adding the following after subclause (iii):

(iv) meets the requirement for registration set out in the regulations respecting applicants who are already certified by the regulatory body governing the profession of social workers in another Canadian jurisdiction;

Mr. Chairperson: Is there leave of the committee to consider the amendment as printed and circulated to committee members? [Agreed]

THAT Clause 10(1)(a) of the Bill be amended by striking out "or" at the end of subclause (ii), adding "or" at the end of subclause (iii) and adding the following after subclause (iii):

(iv) meets the requirements for registration set out in the regulations respecting applicants who are already certified by a regulatory body governing the profession of social work in another Canadian jurisdiction;

It has been moved by—

An Honourable Member: Dispense.

Mr. Chairperson: The honourable minister—dispense.

The amendment is in order.

Questions? Honourable minister?

Ms. Wowchuk: Mr. Chairman, as I had said earlier, this amendment addresses the legal requirements set out in the recently enacted Labour Mobility Act that requires the governing body of a profession to register persons who are registered by the college in another province.

As this new subclause indicates, the specific details related to the requirements will be set out in the college regulations.

Mr. Chairperson: Mrs. Mitchelson, did you have your hand up?

Mrs. Mitchelson: Yes, I was just going to ask for clarification of the amendment, and I want to thank the minister for that.

So we're striking out "or" after sub (ii), and are we putting in an "or" after sub (iii), before we move on to (iv)?

An Honourable Member: Yes. Yes.

Mrs. Mitchelson: Does it say that in the amendment?

An Honourable Member: Yes.

Mrs. Mitchelson: Okay, I'm just—[interjection] Adding "or", okay. Thank you.

Mr. Chairperson: Any further comments or questions?

Is the committee ready for the question?

Some Honourable Members: Question.

Mr. Chairperson: Do you wish to have the amendment reread?

An Honourable Member: No.

An Honourable Member: Dispense.

* (00:20)

Mr. Chairperson: Shall the amendment pass?

Amendment—pass.

Clause 10 as amended—pass; clause 11—pass; clauses 12 and 13—pass; clause 14—pass; clauses 15 and 16—pass; clause 17—pass; clauses 18 and 19—pass;

clauses 20 and 21—pass; clauses 22 and 23—pass; clause 24—pass; clause 25—pass; clauses 26 through 28—pass; clauses 29 and 30—pass; clause 31—pass; clauses 32 and 33—pass; clauses 34 and 35—pass; clause 36—pass; clauses 37 through 40—pass; clauses 41 through 43—pass; clauses 44 and 45—pass; clauses 46 and 47—pass; clauses 48 and 49—pass; clauses 50 and 51—pass; clause 52—pass; clause 53—pass; clause 54—pass; clauses 55 and 56—pass; clauses 57 through 59—pass; clause 60—pass; clause 61—pass; clause 62—pass; clauses 63 and 64—pass; clause 65—pass; clauses 66 through 68—pass; clause 69—pass; clauses 70 and 71—pass; clauses 72 through 74—pass; clauses 75 and 76—pass; clause 77—pass; clauses 78 through 81—pass;

Shall the table of contents pass?

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Inkster): Mr. Chair, I do have a question of the minister. In a number of the presentations, there was a great deal of concern expressed in terms of the lack of guarantee of Aboriginal representation on the board and I'm wondering as to why it is the government wouldn't bring an amendment to have a representative, for example, from the MKO or Manitoba Métis Federation be afforded the opportunity to have representation in legislation, or am I to assume that she might do that for third reading?

Ms. Wowchuk: Mr. Chairman, those issues would be addressed through the by-laws under section 61(1), it spells out the different opportunities and how the nomination process and the number of people that would fill the board and so I think that'll be addressed and I can assure the member that I've had some discussion with the various organizations about how they might get involved and ensure that their views are heard and look for participation on that part.

Mr. Lamoureux: I'm looking at, in clause 6(1), the composition of the board, and why it is that we couldn't incorporate into there some sort of allowance that would give a guarantee in legislation for representation from, as I say, whether it's the Manitoba Chiefs organization or the Manitoba Métis association.

Ms. Wowchuk: Based on the experiences in other provinces, there was no guarantee that you would—that some of these organizations would want to be on the board. So, under these by-laws, that can be worked through. But there is no guarantee in other jurisdictions, and it isn't the experience that they

have had that you could guarantee that somebody would be on the board.

Mr. Chairperson: Further questions?

Seeing none, table of contents—pass; enacting clause—pass; title—pass.

Shall the bill as amended be reported?

Some Honourable Members: No.

Some Honourable Members: Agreed.

Mr. Chairperson: The Chair hears a no. All those—on division?

An Honourable Member: On division.

Mr. Chairperson: The bill will be reported on division—as amended on division.

The hour being 12:26 p.m., what's the will of committee?

Some Honourable Members: Rise.

Mr. Chairperson: Thank you to the committee members for your work this evening and to our staff who assisted us.

Committee rise.

COMMITTEE ROSE AT: 12:26 a.m.

WRITTEN SUBMISSIONS PRESENTED BUT NOT READ

September 21, 2009

Clerk of Committees

249 Legislative Building
Winnipeg MB R3C 0V8

Re: Bill 4—The Community Revitalization Tax Increment Financing Act

The AMM would like to thank the Committee for the opportunity to submit comments on Bill 4: The Community Revitalization Tax Increment Financing Act. The AMM is supportive of this bill as it offers municipalities another tool to promote and attract investment in their communities.

Bill 4 provides new tools to promote community economic development by moving the incremental education tax that would have been paid into a community revitalization fund whose purpose is the revitalize communities, encourage economic development, enhance social and cultural development and preserve heritage projects.

Municipalities are pleased to see amendments included from the original bill that will strengthen municipal control over where the funds will be spent. In particular section 15(7) ensures that a grant from the fund will only be used for a purpose agreed to by the municipality.

The AMM is also pleased to see included in the bill a system of accountability and transparency in how the fund is administered. By requiring audited statements and an annual report transparency is ensured.

While municipalities still face overwhelming challenges when it comes to downloading and a ballooning municipal infrastructure deficit, we are appreciate of new tools that will help municipalities attract investment into their communities.

Sincerely,
Doug Dobrowolski
President

* * *

William and Catherine Booth College Statement of Support

Legislative Standing Committee

Bill 9- The Social Work Profession Act

May 11, 2009

Dear Members of the Legislative Standing Committee, Legislative Assembly of Manitoba:

The William and Catherine Booth College (Booth College) Social Work Program has been a staunch supporter of the Manitoba Association of Social Workers (MASW) and the Manitoba Institute of Social Workers (MIRSW) since the inception of our Social Work Program. As an academic institution, we require social work faculty members be registered with the Manitoba Institute of Registered Social Workers (MIRSW). As well, students become member of MASW from the time of their acceptance into the program. Since 1997, when our students became eligible for registration with the institute, graduating students have been provided with applications for registration with MIRSW. Students learn from the outset of their studies the importance of providing ethical, competent, and professional practice and being registered with a regulatory body. The unwavering support for mandatory registration is born of our conviction in the imperatives for our profession found in the CASW Code of Ethics (2005). Protection of the public is primary to us. Regulating the profession

will ensure the public is accessing the credible and accountable service they deserve. Legislation will provide an important course of redress for community members to turn to if concerns arise.

While legislation is good for the community, it is also important for professional social workers as well. Legislation will bring social work in line with other professions. By making registration mandatory, the new college will be able to advance the practice of social workers as many of the provinces already have. Legislation will offer more credibility to the role as those who are practicing under the name will be guaranteed to have a standard of knowledge, values, and skills deemed essential to meet the needs of clientele served by social workers.

Our graduates have consistently benefited from their acceptance in the social work community by being a part of MASW/MIRSW. We look forward to our continuing affiliation for our, graduates, and ourselves within the new college.

May 11, 2009
Clerk of Committees
251 Legislative Building,
Winnipeg, MB

Dear Legislative Standing Committee Bill 9:

Re: Bill 9 – Social Work Profession Act

As an academic institution, graduates of William and Catherine Booth College are currently eligible for registration with the Manitoba Institute of Registered Social Workers. It is the hope of Booth College that graduates will still be eligible for registration in the Manitoba College of Social Workers, similar to the manner that currently exists for graduates of accredited programs or whatever process is determined for graduates of accredited programs.

William and Catherine Booth College believes mandatory regulation of the social work profession is essential. Therefore, please find a letter of support for the legislation and its content, as well as the formation of a Manitoba College of Social Workers.

Sincerely,
Bonnie Bryant, MSW, RSW
Chair, Department of Social Work
William and Catherine Booth College

* * *

Re: BILL 9 – THE SOCIAL WORK PROFESSION ACT

SUBMITTED BY:

**The Western Manitoba Liaison Group,
MASW/MIRSW**

The Western Manitoba Liaison Group (referred to subsequently as the Liaison Group), Manitoba Association of Social Workers/Manitoba Institute of Registered Social Workers (MASW/MIRSW), is an affiliation of Social Workers who work in health and social service agencies in Western Manitoba. We have a formalized relationship with the Board of MASW/MIRSW, in that there is a representative of the Board who regularly attends our meetings in Brandon, which occur approximately bi-monthly, and provides a report to the Board of activities occurring in the western part of the province. The Liaison Group offers opportunities for members to network, share information about Social Work services in the region, become informed about issues that are being discussed at the Board level, and provide input, through the Board member, to issues being discussed at a provincial or national level of the Social Work profession. The names of the Social Workers who contributed to this written submission are listed at the end of this document. The comments reflect the views of people who contributed to this document. We do not wish to imply that we speak on behalf of other Social Workers in our geographic area.

The Liaison Group is in support of the proposed *Social Work Profession Act*. The new legislation replaces voluntary registration and regulation of the profession with mandatory registration. This means that only those people who meet the profession's standards for registration, as specified in the legislation, can call themselves Social Workers. This offers the public the assurance that Social Workers are qualified to provide a service to them. It also ensures that Social Workers, by virtue of their membership in the College are committed to practice in accordance with the Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice of the profession. The legislation offers a complaint process and review of professional competence. All of these serve to increase the level of protection for members of our community against incompetent or unethical behaviour by those calling themselves Social Workers. Formerly, the professional body had no means to investigate the conduct of, or impose sanctions on, Social Workers who chose not to be members of MIRSW.

The proposed College of Social Workers, by setting and enforcing standards to be met by persons working in the Social Work field, offers protection to employers by assuring that an individual's credentials are recognized as equivalent to a Social Work degree, conferred by an accredited University program in Manitoba, regardless of where the degree was earned. Such standards would be harmonized with the standards of equivalent bodies in other provinces and territories. This should facilitate inter-provincial mobility for Social Workers to take advantage of employment opportunities. Likewise, recruitment of Social Workers from other provinces or territories should be easier for employers in Manitoba.

With all Social Workers in the province registered with a central governing body, there will be the means for improved communication across the profession. This will facilitate the distribution of information, research, best practices, and current developments in Social Work. The College will also be a resource for seminars and workshops for its members and will require that members meet standards for continuing education as a condition of their membership. These features contribute to the Manitoba public receiving the best possible Social Work service available.

The Manitoba College of Social Workers will represent all Social Workers in the province. This will provide a more unified and stronger voice to represent the interests of disadvantaged or marginalized citizens. The College will also be a logical source for governments of all levels to consult about the implications of proposed by-laws, laws, or regulations related to Social Work services or fields of practice (eg. housing, child welfare, health services, etc.).

The proposed College will also provide a vital link between Social Work educators (universities and/or colleges) and Social Work practitioners. The educational programs will receive feedback about the needs of Social Work employers. There would be increased potential for mentorship of new graduates by more experienced Social Workers.

The Social Work profession in Manitoba has been working toward replacing the previous legislation governing the profession for a number of years. It is time that our province passes legislation that will, in effect, place the Social Work profession, in Manitoba, on equal footing with Social Work organizations in other provinces, as well as with

other professional organizations (nurses, psychologists, etc.) within the province.

Respectfully submitted,

Laura Crookshanks, M.S.W.,R.S.W.
Linda Dustan Selinger, M.S.W.,R.S.W.
Corinne Elliott, M.S.W.,R.S.W.
Jill Hannah-Kayes, B.S.W.,R.S.W.
Andrew Kiazzyk, R.S.W.
Denise McDonald, B.S.W.,R.S.W.
Elizabeth McLeod B.S.W.,R.S.W.
Adele Robins, B.S.W.,R.S.W.
Kerry Skinner, M.S.W.,R.S.W.
Amanda Winder, B.S.W.,R.S.W.

* * *

Re: Bill 9

To: the Standing Committee

I am writing to indicate my support for the social work legislation that will serve public interest in the following ways:

establish standards of practice for the profession provide processes for complaints to ensure standards of practice are followed to protect the public increase the accountability of social workers & their employers allow for on-going training & development, so that practices standards are high this will help to identify gaps in the training of social workers allow the organization to provide professional development of social workers provide the public with some clarity with respect to the profession of social work by protecting the title, thereby affording additional protection to the public.

Thank-you.
Neta Friesen
BSW, RSW., M.M.F.T.

* * *

Re: Bill 9

Miriam Browne, Executive Director
MASW/MIRSW

Dear Miriam:

We have been following, with interest, developments to move ahead the passage of new legislation that would ensure regulation of the practice of social work in Manitoba. We wanted to share our sense of this with you, although this may come somewhat belatedly. In summary, the observations we would like to share with you, and would welcome you to

forward to the Standing Committee, if you think it appropriate are:

1. We are very pleased to know that the process that would see enactment of the legislation is moving forward and that it could be through the legislature by the end of the current session.
2. We believe this process will ultimately offer greater credibility to the title "social worker" and to the profession of social work.
3. Regulation of the practice of social work, including requirements for the completion of continuing education is fully supported by us.
4. Increased accountability of the profession and its members, including disciplinary action, is supported by us.
5. We believe that the enactment of the legislation will increase the pride that social workers, their employers and the public take in the profession of social work.

We would like to take this opportunity to thank the board, staff and membership of MASW/MIRSW for their considerable efforts to bring the passage of the legislation to fruition. We are well aware that this process has been many years as a work-in-progress, and share in your anticipation and delight that this step in the journey is near its conclusion.

Yours very sincerely,

Heather Kirkham

On behalf of the social workers who are Community Mental Health Workers in the Assiniboine Regional Health Authority.

* * *

Re: Bill 9

April 29, 2009
Clerk of Committees
251 Legislative Building
Winnipeg, MB

Our province is over due for this type of unifying regulation. It brings consistency, and overall better professional services to a large variety of essential human services in our province. I have witnessed unprofessional and unethical behaviour from those who call themselves Social Workers, and was embarrassed by this behaviour. If there had been a regulated society of Social Workers, I might have

reported it. This type of legislation brings accountability, and greater respect for this profession as people will receive more consistent service that coincides with acceptable public expectations.

Sincerely

Keith Mander
MASW/MIRSW member

September 21, 2009

Legislative Assembly of Manitoba
Social and Economic Development Committee

Dear Committee,

I would first like to commend the government for introducing legislation regulating the social work profession. Thank you also for your support for the Social Work Act and development of the College of Social Work. This is long overdue, as most other provinces have this in place, and CASW ethical guidelines are merely suggestions, unless legislated accountability is in place. Any person can use the label 'Social Worker' as their label, and authority to influence those who we are responsible to inform with empowerment & insight. However, without an enforcing professional body to enforce that decisions are made within an ethical framework that promotes the best interest of the client, they may as well just be random or very subjective opinions or directives to an unsuspecting person looking for any kind of hope to get them through this period in their life.

I am writing this letter to show my support for the legislation as it stands including recognition of education programs approved by the Booth College, from which I graduated. I am now in my third Social Work position, and now work as a School Social Worker. Because of the clinical focus of the Social Work program at Booth, my transition into this role has been very smooth, and has exceeded even my current supervisors expectations. This can be attributed to the high standards of the Booth College program that exceed work place expectations for a BSW graduate, by the organizations I have been involved with (CFS, MacDonald Youth Services, and Child Guidance Clinic).

The MIRSW has made several visits to the program at Booth College, and have fully endorsed it for many years now. I believe that registration of graduates from the Booth College social work program should continue, as this action is a model to all other institutions of the importance of being part

of a community of professionals that adhere to professional standards. The MIRSWS has stated on several occasions to me that they have had fewer ethical issues or even accusations toward any Booth graduates, proportionally speaking, as compared to other BSW graduates in the province.

Thank you for your efforts and considerations.

Sincerely,

Keith Mander
Child Guidance Clinic
Winnipeg School Division

* * *

Re: Bill 9

May 12, 2009
Clerk of Committees
251 Legislative Building
Winnipeg, MB

Dear Clerk of the Committees,

I write on behalf of the Canadian Association of Social Workers (CASW) to add our Association's support to the Government of Manitoba's legislation *The Social Work Profession Act* as well as the formation of a Manitoba College of Social Workers.

The CASW is the national professional association representing over 17,000 social workers across Canada. It has a federated structure in which the majority of members are social work organizations that serve both roles of professional association and regulatory body. CASW's mandate includes supporting excellence in professional regulation.

As we have expressed in the past, regulation of the profession is one means of ensuring that members of society receive the best service from the most adequately trained professionals. Beyond accountability, regulation encourages professional commitment to continuing education; further, social workers who join their professional organizations have access to opportunities for improving and updating their skills and knowledge on a regular basis.

Regulation reflects government's commitment to care for its citizens by ensuring that services are provided by qualified professionals who are accountable for their actions. Failure to regulate the social work profession keeps citizens at risk. CASW strongly supports the Manitoba legislation; once this legislation becomes law, the people of Manitoba will

finally be much better protected when they engage in social work services across the province.

Sincerely,
Veronica Marsman MSW, RSW
President

* * *

Re: Social Work Profession Act

The Social Work Health Interest Group of the Manitoba Institute of Registered Social Workers-Manitoba Association of Social Workers strongly supports *The Social Work Profession Act* and the development of a Manitoba college of social workers.

The Social Work Health Interest Group was established to promote and support social work practice in health care across the province. The goals of the Health Interest Group include: to ensure the MASW-MIRSWS board and the profession are informed regarding the impact of health-care issues on the profession and the public; to implement health-related projects of importance to the profession; to provide consultation and advise on issues referred by MASW and the CASW Health Interest Group; and to create a network of support to social workers in health care.

The Social Work Profession Act will provide protection to the public by ensuring that social workers have appropriate educational credentials and meet standards for professional conduct and continuing competency. Through the proposed legislation, there will be a process for complaints, investigation, inquiry and discipline. Clients and their families who are experiencing health concerns are often at their most vulnerable and they have a right to expect that the social work services they are receiving are being provided by qualified social workers who are accountable for their practice.

Social workers working in health care are in a position, through their work with clients and families, to identify common issues and concerns that require attention on a more global basis. A college of social workers will serve as a forum for social workers in health to raise these issues and to provide a strong voice of advocacy.

In health care, *The Social Work Profession Act* will give social workers credibility. Working within a multi-disciplinary team is an important part of our work and, currently, social work is the only discipline that is not licensed. Licensing will allow

the social work profession to take its place as an equal partner in the provision of ethical and competent service to health-care consumers.

Sincerely, Marie McKie, MSW, RSW, Chair, Social Work Health Interest Group

* * *

April 17th, 2009
Clerk of Committees
251 Legislative Building
Winnipeg, MB

Dear Chairperson:

RE: Bill 9 – The Social Work Profession Act

I am a social worker and have been practicing in Manitoba for the past 26 years and am very pleased to finally have my profession acknowledged by the Manitoba Government and to have at last gained credibility in the passing of Bill 9.

I totally support this bill and encourage the government to proceed with the passing of the bill.

Social Workers are a very diverse group who work in vast area of fields, some in groups and some who are working alone to service the public. We become social workers to help other people when they are faced with hardships. To do this social workers require a unique set of skills and although we start where the client is at and all come from different cultures and backgrounds, it is important to have the basic social works skills and education to practice. When people are facing hardships, they are putting their trust in individuals who call themselves social workers and do not anticipate that the social workers they trust may be mis-representing themselves and have no social work credentials at all. The passing of this bill will ensure that people calling themselves social workers are regulated and are indeed social workers. This bill will ensure the protection of the interests of the public and enhance the social work profession in the eyes of the public.

The regulatory function of the college will serve the profession through the protection of title, adherence to specified educational credentials, ongoing development of professional standards, values and codes of conduct, and protect the public interest through access to a complaint, investigation inquiry and disciplinary process. The social work value is "do no harm" and the passing of this bill will go a long way to ensure that this value is upheld.

For Social Workers who work alone in an organization, the professional association function will offer a collegial environment while continuing to offer continuing education to ensure competency, public education and activities of common interest and concern to the profession.

Licensing social workers with the passing of Bill 9 will strengthen the social work profession while providing protection to the public.

The Social Work Profession Act will modernize legislation of social work in Manitoba and remove some of barriers for inter-provincial mobility currently encountered by Social Workers.

The current voluntary association has been an open and inclusive organization and has endeavored to include all the diverse groups of social workers. This is an ongoing goal for the college.

The social work profession promotes social change, problem solving, empowerment, principles of human rights and social justice and I believe that these are the principles that the new College of Social Workers of Manitoba will up hold.

Passing Bill 9 will bring Manitoba Social Workers into the modern world with other Canadian Provinces and the rest of the world.

Thank you for your time.

Respectfully submitted,
Leona Schroeder, BSW, RSW
Winnipeg, Manitoba

* * *

Re: Bill 9

May 8, 2009
Clerk of Committees
251 Legislative Building
Winnipeg, MB

Attention Standing Committee

On behalf of the Manitoba Children's Issues Interest Group (CIIG) I am writing to express our support for **BILL 9 THE SOCIAL WORK PROFESSION ACT.**

The Manitoba CIIG was formed in December of 2005. Other Canadian provinces have similar groups, which were formed previously. The CIIG meets monthly to discuss a wide variety of issues and interests concerning Canada's children. The membership of Manitoba's CIIG is comprised of

social workers from various fields of practice who meet regularly to discuss current national and provincial issues. The group is a subcommittee of the Manitoba Association of Social Workers/Manitoba Institute of Registered Social Workers (MASW/MIRSW). The Canadian Association of Social Worker (CASW) Board liaison, Darlene Macdonald, and CASW staff social worker, communicate with the MASW/MIRSW Board on social work matters; which, in turn influences the direction of the Manitoba CIIG. This group recently created and disseminated a national pamphlet describing child protection services for Canadian children.

We believe that children are the most vulnerable populations in our society. Every child has a right to be safe and secure. Child safety is everyone's responsibility. By implementing this Bill 9, we are working together to protect and empower children and their caregivers. Children receive services from Social Workers in health care settings, education settings, government sectors and private sectors. It is our public responsibility to ensure those professionals are qualified to deliver the services that children need. The work of a social worker requires one to be trained in the specific application of knowledge, skills, values and practice methods in a person-in-environment context (Article 2). Without this background and training, unqualified helpers can do more harm to children than good.

The Social Work Profession Act, states that the Act will provide a regulatory function which will serve the profession primarily through protection of title, adherence to specified educational credentials, ongoing development of professional standards, values and codes of conduct; and protect the public interest through access to a complaint, investigation, inquiry and disciplinary process.

Article 15 (1) states that registered social workers will receive a certificate of practice, which will state the type of practice and date of expiration for their practice. These articles will help ensure that children are receiving services from qualified, professional social workers who are meeting the objectives of the social work profession (Part II, Article 2), practicing within a code of ethics and standards of practice within the profession. This will help parents and caregivers when they are selecting professional helpers for their children and ensure that they are choosing professionals who are authorized to provide these professional services.

The Act further protects children by ensuring there is a clear process for registering and investigating complaints (Part 7). This will ensure that parents, caregivers and children have a formal place to go to register concerns about the conduct of a registered member and that specific action is required by a College to investigate those concerns.

This Act will protect Manitoba's children by ensuring that members have a duty to report another member if they believe the member is unfit to continue to practice or that the member's practice should be restricted (Article 73 (1)).

Finally this Act ensures that all Manitoban employers hire qualified professionals to perform social work services (Article 74 (1)) and that employers also have a duty to report any misconduct, incompetence or incapacity (Article 74 (2)).

If you have any concerns or questions about this submission, please do not hesitate to contact me at 938-5541.

Sincerely,

Vicki Verge, MSW, RSW
Chair
Manitoba Children's Issues and Interest Group

* * *

Re: Bill 9

I graduated from the School of Social Work at the U of M in 1985. Ever since, I've been working as a Community Development Worker in Winnipeg's inner city.

At the School of Social Work there were two streams – clinical and community development or social policy. We studied both, although there was much more emphasis on the clinical side. When I initially enrolled in University, that was also what I was most interested in. But somewhere along the way, probably in the Social Welfare I and II courses, a light bulb went on in my head and my interests shifted. The theory and practical application of social policy as it impacts on the way society works, and in the end the impact on the lives of individuals, began to make a lot of sense.

I've always thought that there must be a way for the two streams to be compatible. Couldn't one inform the other? Couldn't a strong clinical knowledge base lend expertise as we deal with

individuals in communities? And conversely, couldn't a community development approach be a resource to clinical workers as they try to strengthen the lives of individuals? And couldn't a policy framework strengthen the understanding of clinical Social Workers particularly in areas such as Child Welfare. And couldn't clinical workers support the advocacy and policy change work that is part of community development?

Working as a CD worker within the child welfare system, which until devolution a few years ago utilized both CD workers and case workers, presented lots of opportunities to ponder these things. CD workers were constantly grappling with how to find a niche for themselves and how to legitimize themselves within a system that was heavily weighted toward case work.

This was always a challenge because the truth is that the basic belief systems underpinning each, are very different one from the other. In one, the practitioners are focused on correcting individual behaviours, in the other, practitioners work along side community people, trying to build systems of support. One relies on expert knowledge on the part of the practitioner, the other strives to build on community knowledge and expertise. Most significantly, one (the CD approach) acknowledges inequities in the way society is structured and seeks to remediate these inequities as an underlying goal in everything we do. The belief is that systemic change is the way to work toward long term, meaningful change in the lives of those who are marginalized, whether because of economic disparity, racism, the effects of colonialism and residential schools or a host of other conditions that leave people out of mainstream society.

In Winnipeg we have a very strong CD community in the inner city. Practitioners have gained a strong base of expertise and knowledge and the results are clear. Much of the activity is supported by the current government through initiatives such as Neighbourhoods Alive which has made it possible for the development of NRCs such as the SNA and WBDC. These organizations alone have had a real impact in inner city neighbourhoods, in areas such as housing, safety and community involvement. Other community-based initiatives like women's centres, projects that support newcomers and youth, and a host of strong Aboriginal organizations have also made a real difference in the lives of people in the inner city.

This kind of work though, has always been on the margins – not as readily acceptable in mainstream systems and not as well resourced.

I believe that with this legislation for a regulatory body for Social Work, we see another example of this. MASW and MIRSW are bodies which have been relevant exclusively for clinical Social Workers. With this new regulatory body, I think the definition of 'what is Social Work' will inevitably be narrowed down to the exclusion of community-based Social Work. This is regrettable. Despite the difficulty in finding compatibility between the two, the entire field of social work is much stronger when the perspective includes a broad policy framework.

The question should be asked – is this an appropriate regulatory model for Social Work anyway? I think that clinical Social Workers to whom this mostly applies, should answer that question. In particular the new Aboriginal child welfare authorities, for whom this might be a foreign concept, should be consulted. But when it comes to community-based Social Work or Community Development, I don't think a regulatory body like this is either appropriate or necessary. Nothing has arisen in the field that points to the need for it. Continuing education and learning is always appropriate but this is already being done through community-based training and forums, through RRCC and the University of Winnipeg Urban and Inner City Studies program.

It is hard to see how a regulatory body such as that suggested in this bill could make community-based social workers any more responsive to the communities they work in.

Thank you.

Erika Wiebe

Presentation to the Social and Economic Standing Committee regarding Bill 9 – the Social Work Profession Act

Shauna MacKinnon
Social Worker
September 21, 2009

I am here to express my concerns with Bill 9 – The Social Work Profession Act.

I would like to begin by saying how unfortunate it is that this Bill has created so much division among

social workers. I believe that much of this would have been avoided had the MASW/MIRSW more openly engaged the social work community in the process. As social workers, the MASW/MIRSW would know that consultation requires more than having a few forums to provide information to people. It requires an openness to hear concerns and address them in a meaningful way.

Tom Simms, Michael Hart and myself requested a meeting with the MASW/MIRSW director and board in the summer to discuss our concerns about Bill 9 and to see if we could find some common ground. Our request was denied.

For the record, I am a social worker with a MSW and I am currently completing a PhD. I am not, and have no intentions of becoming licensed with the MIRSW. My social work practice has been at the community level as an activist and researcher committed to social justice. I believe that I am accountable to the community that I serve rather than my social work 'peers' who may or may not share my values and concerns for social justice. I personally have nothing to gain or lose from Bill 9. I am here to present my concerns about the broader implications of the Bill and to suggest revisions that I believe would improve the Bill.

Concerns with the MASW/MIRSW

The MASW/MIRSW initiated this process. They have long worked to have mandatory licensing legislated.

The Manitoba Association of Social Workers website describes themselves as "the voice of the social work profession, providing peer support and connecting you with social workers across Canada. It educates members as well as the public, and is in the forefront of the profession through advocacy and social action."

The most recent annual report available on the MASW website shows 612 MASW/MIRSW members. An additional 72 are solely members of the MASW, 79 of are licensed through the MIRSW but not MASW members, another 66 are student members of the MASW who are not licensed. This is a total of 691 members who are currently licensed. It is also important to note that within the membership, not all will be supportive of licensing. Some are licensed because their work places require it. Others, like myself, have made a conscious decision to not be licensed. In fact several MASW/MIRSW members have expressed support for the concerns

raised in a critique of licensing that was circulated by Tom Simms and myself in the spring of this year. (I will address this further that later in my presentation).

So, it remains unclear exactly how many members are in support of mandatory licensing.

The reality is that social work is a very broad field. Social workers do NOT have a unified voice. There has long been a divide between social workers who would like to move the 'discipline' further into the professional realm and those who feel it should remain more closely connected to its activist roots. For many social workers, including myself, licensing is not something we think about. There is a long list of progressive social work practitioners and theorists that argue that the 'culture of professionalism', which is the central starting point for those advocating for licensing, "benefits professionals more than it does service users. It is conservative, self interested, and oriented towards the status quo" (Mullaly, 2002). So as you can see, the MASW/MIRSW, while purporting to be the 'voice of the social work community', reflects a particular view that is not shared by all social workers. Certainly the board of the MASW/MIRSW which appears to unanimously support this legislation and has in fact made it their priority in recent years, does not speak for all social workers.

The website goes on to explain that the MIRSW is the regulatory 'arm' of the profession. This is where things get confusing. While there appear to be two very distinct roles (MASW as advocate/educator and MIRSW as licensing body) they are both governed by one board. And, as the board readily admits, the primary activity of the MASW/MIRSW board has been on moving this legislation forward. This is important to note because it appears that the stated role of the MASW has been lost. If Bill 9 passes, under the current structure and leadership, this is unlikely to change.

Concerns about Bill 9 - process and content

I would like to provide a brief summary of my concerns about Bill 9. I will begin with concerns about the process followed by concerns with the legislation itself.

First I would like to note that the unwillingness of the management of MASW/MIRSW to allow for open dialogue and input into Bill 9 has led me to be very concerned about the body that will become the Manitoba College of Social Workers. In the spring of

2009 I joined the MASW (not the MIRSW) with the hope of encouraging the organization to become more actively involved in social justice issues. I have long criticized the MASW/MIRSW for their lack of involvement in the community but I thought that I would become a member with hope of nudging the organization in a more progressive direction. I had a few meetings with MASW staff however they have clearly been focused on the legislation in spite of their state role as educator/advocate. This leads me to my first concern.

If a College of Social Workers is to be implemented, there must be a clear governance structure that ensures that the MASW/MIRSW staff, board and/or selected members are not making licensing decisions. There should be a wide representation from community, academia and practitioners in a range of practice areas. There should be clear separation between those who are on the Board and executive of MASW/MIRSW and the College. More diversity is required so that policies, procedures and mandates can be developed by those who represent a broad sector in social work practice, education and policy areas as well as client and community groups. It is not good enough to have representation, as is currently stated in the legislation, based on geographic region (and one student).

The second concern I would like to raise is with the process that led to the legislation.

As I noted earlier, the MASW does not speak for all Social Workers. Their membership is approximately one quarter the number of practicing social workers in Manitoba. The MASW has not been actively involved in advocacy efforts in the community. In fact I would go so far as to say that most of those working on issues of importance to social workers—poverty, housing etc.—would not even know what the MASW is. Any involvement has been recent and superficial at best, coinciding with the recent criticism of this legislation.

The MASW leadership readily admit that the Association has not been engaged in the community. They state that licensing will allow the MASW to get more involved as they will have greater funds to dedicate to social justice issues. But there is nothing in the legislation to ensure this and quite frankly, the record of the organization, the representation on the current board, and the lack of meaningful consultation in this process leave me with little confidence that much will change.

The MASW/MIRSW will say that they *have* consulted extensively with the community. But the nature and extent of these consultations remains a mystery. What I do know for certain is that the MASW/MIRSW have ignored any concerns that have been raised and they have suppressed dialogue. One example is the recent refusal of the executive to meet to discuss concerns raised in an article written by myself and Tom Simms that was circulated broadly and later printed in the Winnipeg Free Press. It would be of interest to this committee to know that this article was broadly circulated *after* the MASW declined to print it in their newsletter prior to the passing of the legislation. Although the MASW invited us in December 2008 to write an article for the MASW/MIRSW newsletter presenting an alternative view on licensing, it had not yet been published seven months later. I contacted the Director in mid July to inquire of the status of the article and I was advised that the article would be published in the fall 2009 newsletter. I expressed concerns that printing the article in the fall would be too late for input into the legislative process. I am sure you would all agree that there is little point in trying to inform a debate on this issue after the legislation has passed. Nonetheless, we were assured that it was completely coincidental that our article would not be in print until after legislation passed.

It would also be of interest to this committee to know that in July 2009 Tom Simms and I received an email from the editor of the newsletter stating the following:

“ I wanted to take a moment and let you both know that the article that you submitted on legislation, in response to our request, will not be included in the June edition of the newsletter. I am deeply embarrassed and disappointed by this situation and I would like to extend my sincerest apologies to the both of you. The committee truly does appreciate the time and effort that you put into writing the article.

In June, the Editorial Committee received written direction from Leona Schroeder (President, MASW/MIRSW) and Miriam Browne (Executive Director, MASW/MIRSW) on behalf of the Executive Committee, to "Refrain from including in this newsletter any written submissions that expressed oppositional and dissenting opinions regarding the legislation or the development of the Manitoba College of Social Workers. At this sensitive time in the progress of the legislation, publication of opposing opinions in the official

newsletter of the organization would be contrary to the strategic goals and aims of the organization and risk undermining the achievement of successful passage of the legislation." And that "when the content for this newsletter has been developed, a consultation with the Board, or the Executive Committee on its behalf, must occur to gain approval prior to publication."

I believe that this information is important for this committee because it explains why people like myself who have been critical of this process are concerned. If this is how the MASW/MIRSW consults with and allows for public education, and dialogue and debate among social workers on an issue of critical importance, we have a very big problem.

Content of the Legislation

The three main arguments that the MASW/MIRSW and other proponents of licensing or 'registration' of social workers seem to present are:

1. to ensure that social workers meet basic education requirements;
2. ensure that social workers are actively engaging in ongoing professional development (continued competence)
3. to provide a mechanism for the public/peers to report social workers for misconduct/or unfitness to practice social work

The MASW/MIRSW argues that we need to ensure that standards are in place for social workers and that those deemed to be social workers must remain 'competent' as defined by the 'college' who they argue to be a panel of social work 'peers'. While I don't disagree with the need for competence, I don't agree that a College of Social Workers is required to decide who is competent and what they need to do to "continue" their competence.

I would like to point out that the majority of social worker are employed with government or non-government agencies that provide ongoing education and 'professional' development specific to their areas of practice. I would argue that the only social workers for which there might be concern would be those in private practice. And this is a very small minority of social workers for whom licensing would be appropriate.

I would also argue that the MASW/MIRSW is not best placed to make decisions of what is appropriate training. Organizations employing social workers

will know better what skills and education their workers require.

Process to register complaints

Much of the Act focuses on outlining a formal process for registering complaints about social workers who may be negligent. MASW/MIRSW argues that this is necessary to protect the public. In fact, there are already processes in place. Since the majority of social workers work for government or non-government organizations, complaints can be made through the channels that exist within those organizations.

Again, it seems, that the social workers who may require licensing are those whom are currently not accountable to anyone. These would be those in private practice. Perhaps mandatory licensing for private practice social workers makes some sense.

Aboriginal social worker practice

In addition to the lack of attention to social justice in Bill 9, the lack of any recognition of the Aboriginal social work community is a critical oversight. Our provincial government is to be applauded for their leadership in recognizing the need to devolve responsibility of Aboriginal child welfare into the hands of the Aboriginal community.

While I don't have numbers to support this, I would venture to guess that a very high percentage of Aboriginal social workers are employed with Aboriginal child welfare or other Aboriginal organizations. Yet nowhere in the Act is there any mention of the distinct needs and interests of Aboriginal social workers. It is my understanding that there is not significant Aboriginal representation on the MASW/MIRSW board of directors, if any at all. In the spirit of devolution of child welfare responsibility to First Nation and Metis Child Welfare Authorities, at the very least this legislation must recognize the distinct needs and interests of Aboriginal Social Workers.

Recommended amendments

I support the recommendations that have been presented by the signatories of the letter from the Centre for Anti oppression studies. I have listed them in my written presentation but since they will be presented by others, I won't verbally present them.

1. We appreciate the provincial government's commitment to devolve child welfare services to First Nation and Metis communities as a means to begin to recognize and address the impact of

colonization regarding the child welfare system. In the spirit of devolution, we recommend that the Social Work Profession Act include the establishment of a parallel College of Aboriginal Social Workers in Manitoba that would be responsible to its membership for implementing the legislation.

2. That the Social Work Profession Act legislation be reviewed by a representative committee of Aboriginal social workers, agencies and organizations for their input prior to Third and Final Reading of Bill 9.
3. That the legislation mandate that all fees for licensing social workers be divided between the Manitoba College of Social Workers and the Aboriginal College of Social Workers in Manitoba (the equitable division of the fees would be negotiated between the Aboriginal Social Workers Society in Manitoba and the MASW/MIRSW prior to the application of the legislation with full consideration given to the number of Aboriginal social workers in Manitoba, the total number of social workers in Manitoba, and the estimated number of Aboriginal peoples served by most agencies and organizations in relation to the number of people served by those agencies).
4. We are concerned that the important role of social justice within the social work field will be diminished in the move towards the professionalization of social work. Licensing and professionalization promotes the technical aspects of helping with a growing emphasis on impartiality, neutrality and apolitical service. Social work is unique in that its code of ethics emphasizes social justice goals. For many social workers, licensing does little to address the root causes of poverty and oppression in our society.

Therefore, we recommend that The Manitoba College of Social Workers be mandated in legislation to provide an annual fund to support social justice work including research, issue organizing and education. The legislation would include the provision of a seven person committee to govern the fund including 3 positions appointed by the College and 4 positions appointed by community organizations. (The formula for determining the amount of this fund that would be included in the legislation would be negotiated between social justice groups and the MASW/MIRSW prior to the final adoption of the legislation)

Several social workers have endorsed the amendments recommended above. It should also be noted that several social workers that I have spoken with, while supportive, were afraid to publicly endorse our position for fear of reprisal.

Before passing this legislation this committee must understand that there is a very small minority of social workers pushing for this, presumably all of whom will already be licensed, and most of whom will be working in clinical settings and in private practice. This is not representative of the social work community.

I don't support mandatory licensing. However, I am under no illusions. I expect that Bill 9 will likely pass through the legislature. At the very least I urge the standing committee to amend this legislation as we propose to ensure that social justice issues are not left behind, and so that the legislation better reflects the spirit of the devolution process which this government has championed.

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The Legislative Assembly of Manitoba Debates and Proceedings
are also available on the Internet at the following address:

<http://www.gov.mb.ca/legislature/hansard/index.html>