

For Immediate Release

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High priority placed on the pre-registration of 16 and 17 year olds

Chief Electoral Officer Presents Annual Report to the House of Assembly

Elections Nova Scotia has placed a high priority the pre-registration of 16 and 17 year old high school students in preparation to placing them in the Register of Electors when they turn 18 and become eligible to vote. That is one of the items contained in Elections Nova Scotia's Annual Report tabled today in the House of Assembly. "Reaching and registering young Nova Scotians who have not previously voted in a provincial election has proven to be difficult," says Richard Temporale, the Chief Electoral Officer of Nova Scotia. "Once high school students graduate and leave their family home to work or for post-secondary education, it is very difficult to reach them."

In cooperation with the Department of Education and Nova Scotia School Boards, Elections Nova Scotia is devising a program to reach students in Nova Scotia schools who are currently 16 years of age or older in anticipation of adding them to the Register of Electors when they become eligible. The intent of the program is to address the large gap between electors 18-24 years of age and older Nova Scotian electors who are more likely to be both on the Register of Electors and to vote. During the 2013 provincial general election, approximately 57% of eligible electors 18-24 were registered to vote compared with about 98% of electors 45-65 and 20% of 18-14 year olds voted compared to 74% of electors 45-65.

The report, presented for the first time in bilingual format, indicates that real and perceived conflicts of interest have had the agency contract outside counsel independent of government over the past few years. "It is generally accepted that it is not appropriate for an independent office of the Assembly to have its legal resources selected and supplied by government," reads the report.

Elections Nova Scotia's computerized election management system, developed in-house by the agency, is being assessed for adoption by several of Nova Scotia's municipalities with the assistance of the Department of Municipal Affairs. The election management bodies of three other provincial jurisdictions are also actively pursuing this option. "Together with the Geographic Information Systems

(GIS) tools developed by our staff, the election management system positions Nova Scotia as a leader among modern election management administration.

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[Annual Report of the Chief Electoral Officer 2013-14](#)