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**Official Report
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Wednesday 27 May 2015

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des débats
(Hansard)**

Mercredi 27 mai 2015

**Standing Committee on
the Legislative Assembly**

Petitions

**Comité permanent de
l'Assemblée législative**

Pétitions

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

**STANDING COMMITTEE ON
THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY**

**COMITÉ PERMANENT DE
L'ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE**

Wednesday 27 May 2015

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The committee met at 1301 in committee room 1.

PETITIONS

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Garfield Dunlop): Good afternoon, everyone. We'll begin the meeting of the Standing Committee on the Legislative Assembly. Today, we're doing petition procedures.

DR. NICOLE GOODMAN

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Garfield Dunlop): We have with us Dr. Nicole Goodman, who has a 20-minute presentation—up to 20 minutes. Then we have up to 40 minutes for the three parties, split equally, to ask questions of Dr. Goodman.

With that, Dr. Goodman, I'd welcome you and ask you to begin your presentation.

Dr. Nicole Goodman: Great. Thank you very much for having me today. Thank you to Trevor and Jonathan for inviting me. My name is Nicole Goodman. I am currently an assistant professor at the University of Toronto, at the Munk School of Global Affairs, and I'm the research director for the Centre for e-Democracy.

I'll begin just by giving you a little bit of background about myself and my qualifications. My PhD is in political science. My dissertation focused on political participation, particularly voting among young people, and the majority of my research looks at political participation—specifically, more recently, Internet voting and the implications of Internet voting. So I think you'll see some ties today in my comments between e-petitions and Internet voting.

The structure of my comments today are going to be in three areas: participation, model considerations, and security. Obviously, I'm a social scientist, so my expertise is going to speak to the participation component of these comments. Model considerations are just some questions—I'm not sure; maybe they've been raised. I read a few of the Hansards. I didn't necessarily see them in that, but they may have been raised so far. If not, they'll be good for discussion. And I did consult with some security experts prior to coming, just to raise some security issues. They have offered, if you would like to hear from somebody, specifically a computer scientist, regarding authentication, that someone would be willing to come and speak to you about that.

I want to start by talking about some participation assumptions, things that people say. You can see this is a screen shot of a recent news article. The House of Commons recently passed to allow e-petitions in March of this year.

Some people say that e-petitions will increase citizen participation, others say that they will promote youth involvement, and then you have people saying that they will increase participation among the underrepresented. So these are some of the touted benefits of e-petitions, just like Internet voting and all sorts of types of e-democracy software and tools.

The reality: I'll start by saying that there is very limited research on e-petitions. That's because, with limited use in various jurisdictions, there's not a lot of data on it yet. I'm going to present to you a little bit of the data that I was able to find in the literature regarding e-petitions and then some of the data that has been collected on Internet voting. There's also limited data on that, but we're getting a little bit better.

I think there are a number of ties between e-petitions and Internet voting and there have actually been quite a few articles where people have suggested that e-petitions might be a gateway to Internet voting.

So e-petitions increasing the number of petitions and number of signatures: Will this happen? Well, we can't say for sure. In Germany and Queensland, for example, there wasn't much of a change—a very limited change. In the UK, there was a large increase, and that's why they had to introduce the 100,000 signature threshold. In Norway, there were no e-petitions that were even used at all.

What is going to happen in Ontario if we adopt e-petitions here? It's difficult to say. I would say it's safer to assume that there would not be a huge increase in the number of petitions and the number of signatures.

Next, who is the average user? If we introduce e-petitions, is this going to all of a sudden encourage the disengaged youth and underrepresented groups to participate? The reality is, based on the data that's out there from Germany, Scotland and Queensland, that the average user is a middle-aged male who has above-average formal education. So it's not necessarily bringing in those young people and bringing in underrepresented groups.

I'd like to speak for a couple of minutes about the impacts of Internet voting, because my hypothesis is that you would see similar impacts if we had more data on e-

petitions. I recently carried out an Internet voting project this past fall in conjunction with the Ontario municipal elections. There were 97 Ontario municipalities that used Internet voting. I approached them all and invited them to participate in the project; 47 elected to do so. We surveyed voters, candidates and electoral administration to learn about the impacts. This represents the largest attitudinal Internet voting study to date in the world.

What do the results tell us? When it comes to turnout, we know that there is a modest impact, if any. We did an analysis of the 2010 Ontario municipal elections, and it showed a 3.5% increase in turnout, so a very modest increase in turnout. Then we looked at elections over time in Ontario, but at the local level, not at the provincial level, because Internet voting hasn't been used provincially yet. We looked at elections from 2000 to 2010, and the results were statistically inconclusive. Now we're going to incorporate the 2014 data set and try and see what we can get from there. Long story short, modest impact, if any impact—we're not sure. What I'm trying to say is, don't expect this to be a panacea to fix participation.

What we do see in Internet voting is that a small number of non-voters are encouraged to participate. A non-voter is somebody who doesn't vote or also an infrequent voter—somebody who votes some of the time. A small number of these people are drawn into the process, and they're drawn in primarily for reasons of accessibility. They say that they weren't able to participate in the past because of illness, because of inclement weather, because of mobility issues, so I would suspect that you would see a similar trend with e-petitions, that for reasons of accessibility, you might see a small increase, but it's going to be a modest increase.

We find with Internet voting, also, that it attracts committed voters mainly, so people who are already voting all the time. In some of the literature I read on e-petitions in preparation for coming today, I started to get the same sense. I don't think they've quite fleshed out enough data yet, but it seems that the activists were able to sign 10 petitions at a time, but it wasn't necessarily drawing in the people who weren't participating. So that's something for you to consider.

Also, with respect to Internet voting, young people are not the likely users. This isn't because young people don't like the Internet. It's not because they wouldn't want to sign an e-petition. It's just because they don't participate as much politically as older cohorts do. They're just not as inclined for various reasons. The average Internet voter, if you're interested, in Ontario is over the age of 50, has a college education at least, is married and has an annual household income of \$80,000 to \$99,000, which is above the average income in Ontario, according to Statistics Canada.

The rationale for introducing e-petitions: What is the rationale that you folks are considering for introducing e-petitions? If it's to increase participation, I would say I wouldn't bet the bank on it. But some rationales that may be good are showing leadership in e-government, access-

ibility or convenience for citizens. We see in the Internet voting studies that have been done of Ontarians that accessibility and convenience are really the big draws. That is why they want to see these e-services; it's for accessibility and convenience—the rationale of citizen-centred service, which is just sort of a different way of saying that. Then for procedural transparency: I'm sure all of you know that governments are moving toward open government. By putting petitions online, people can track them. Sometimes they can see—depending on the model that you choose, if you get so many signatures, they know it will trigger a debate in the House, all those sorts of things. It offers a level of procedural transparency, accountability and openness.

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Overall, my hypothesis about e-petitions and participation is that there may be some impact, but expect it to be modest. It's not going to fix any participation issues with the Ontario electorate. Mostly, it's going to facilitate the engagement of those who are already engaged.

Some other considerations for you when you're considering adopting e-petitions: What kind of model are you going to use? One consideration is a private vendor versus an in-house model. You may have already established this, but there are private vendors that offer services. Right now, Internet voting in Ontario, when used at the municipal level, is carried out by vendors. I know some jurisdictions have used vendors to carry out e-petitions and some are developing models in-house. Which is right for Ontario and why?

Will the petition system be complementary? Will you keep the paper system, and the e-petition system will be complementary to the paper system, or will it be a replacement? If it's going to be a replacement, expect that this could be problematic for some citizens.

Legitimacy: Think about presenting these petitions in the House. If one of you is presenting a petition on behalf of your constituents in the Legislature, will other MPPs at the table treat an e-petition with the same legitimacy as a paper petition? That's something to consider.

Also, what is the perceived worth to your colleagues in terms of a government petition versus a non-government petition? For example, if MPP Dunlop presents a petition from his constituents and he has 1,000 signatures and it's an electronic petition, is that petition going to be worth as much as if MPP Scott comes in and presents a petition she's taken from change.org that one of her constituents went ahead and launched that has 10,000 signatures? It's not a governmental petition, it's a non-governmental petition, but those are some things to think about. What is the perceived worth of these petitions going to be?

Policy: I think this is really, really important. E-petitions are relatively new. They've been around for a little bit in Europe but they're relatively new, particularly to North America, the US and Canada. There is a lack of procedural maturity in terms of establishing regulations on thresholds and security, and knowing what works. I think really taking your time in figuring this out will be

important, not only because you're the provincial Legislature, but I think it's important for municipalities as well.

One of the problems that I found in my research at the municipal level is that municipalities are implementing Internet voting, but there are no overarching regulations. What if municipalities decide they want to implement e-petitions? There won't be any overarching regulations there. Something for you to consider as you're going through this and coming up with these policies is to think about the regulations that you're going to put into place for the Ontario Legislature, but also, would these be applicable to municipalities? Municipalities might look to you for leadership in terms of regulations and protocols if they were implementing e-petitions, or you might pass a bill and say, "These are the protocols you would have to use if implementing e-petitions" to make sure that there is a certain level of security and unity across the board in terms of the implementation of these petitions. I think that's an important point.

Finally, unique contextual factors in Ontario: What's going to determine if this is going to work really well in Ontario? It has to do with a lot of the unique context of the province, so taking that into consideration in deliberation as well.

Security: What are some questions for consideration when we're thinking about security? What is the current method for authentication? How are petitions currently authenticated? Are ordinary petitions currently authenticated? What are the current consequences for a petition? For example, at the federal level, I believe it's 25 signatures and then a paper petition receives a response. Kennedy Stewart had proposed 1,000 signatures, but I believe they decided on 500 signatures for any electronic petition and then they received a response. What are the correct consequences for a petition and what is the current threat model and risk assessment? These are all things that you folks should be thinking about in deliberating on this.

For example, the consequences. Example one: An MPP presents a petition but the government doesn't have to do anything. The consequences for this are not very big, so there's not really that great of a risk. The computer expert I consulted with said, "Well, the type of authentication that would be suggested in this scenario would be bank-based authentication," which is the same system that the CRA, the Canada Revenue Agency, uses, which is single-factor, password-only and no actual verification of identity.

However—I apologize; I think in the printout it says example one, but it's example two—in the case of binding referenda or a much more serious petition, you would want two-factor authentication. Two-factor authentication is something you have and something you know, like a password. In Estonia they use this for Internet voting, and for all their services. Estonians have a card. It's an ID card and it represents their driver's licence, their bus pass, their library card, their health card; it has everything on it. On this card is their digital

signature. Because it has everything on it, they don't want to necessarily just give it away to anyone to use. They're not willing to just give it away, and this authenticates their identity.

There are also keys. This is called a YubiKey. You put this in the computer and you press this button and it will give you a one-time password that you can use. You use that one-time password along with the password that you know, so it's something that you have and something that you know.

Another example of this would be if you get locked out of your Gmail account and you're trying to get back in, Google says to you, "We'll send you a text message with a code and you enter the code and then you can get back into your account." So the cellphone is something that you have. It's something that you have and then something that you know.

We don't have this in Ontario, but in BC they have recall initiatives. I believe that's how they were able to get rid of the HST. When you have a situation like that on your hands, the importance of the petition becomes much more colossal, let's say. Therefore, the threat of someone trying to compromise that petition becomes much greater. These are some of the things you want to think about when you're thinking in terms of security.

In addition, the security of the model will likely also impact the level of participation. When it comes to Internet voting, there are different approaches. I'm not going to get into all of them, but one approach is the one-step model where you just go online, put your PIN code in and you vote. We find that participation with that is pretty high.

Another model is a two-step model where electors or constituents are required to register to vote first and then they vote. With a two-step model we see participation is lower because there's a higher opportunity cost to participation. They have to go through two steps.

What are the steps for the e-petition system going to be? Think about this and know that the greater number of steps will probably likely result in lower participation rates. But by the same token, you have to make sure you have security, so you have to balance the two out together.

I think I'm okay for time. Those were just some initial considerations, but I'm happy to expand more for you in questions.

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Garfield Dunlop): Okay. Thank you very much, Dr. Goodman. We'll now go to the official opposition. We can do this in rounds. We'll try to keep track of your time and make sure everybody gets—let's go for questions to begin with.

Ms. Laurie Scott: Okay. That was an excellent presentation. I haven't been able to be on committee for the full e-petitions, so I have to tell you that a couple of times I sat in briefly and you kind of summarized a lot of my questions because that's what you're thinking of: How do you actually do this, and does it increase participation?

It's interesting the countries that are advanced—Estonia, the system. That's pretty phenomenal to know.

We're not near that here, which begs the question of the e-petitions.

Your comment was interesting that it doesn't increase the number by a huge amount—of the people that are already actively politically involved. That kind of surprised me. There was a petition online for an MNR issue in my riding, but we had people from all over the world engaged in this. Then, of course, you say, "But they're participating; they're making laws." Do you want to expand on that a little bit more? Can you expand on maybe any research you've had or something you haven't already said?

Dr. Nicole Goodman: On people from all over the world using it?

Ms. Laurie Scott: Especially in relation to laws. A lot of petitions are to change laws.

Dr. Nicole Goodman: Yes, definitely, that would be a consideration with an e-petition system. I know that the US has eliminated the geographic location, so you can be anywhere in the world and using the petition system, but other jurisdictions have limited it. So I think that would be something that you would want to consider.

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In terms of the participation—I guess I just want to elaborate a little bit—I think it depends on the reason why people aren't participating. If people aren't participating because they're too busy, if people aren't participating and signing petitions because they're not going to the places, where people are seeking signatures for these petitions but they're passionate and care about an issue, then e-petitions may encourage them to participate.

I guess all of you have probably heard about this democratic deficit that people talk about. It's not going to solve the democratic deficit. People often say technology is going to solve things and the reality is that it may offer some solutions and it may encourage some people to participate, but it's not going to bring the apathetic into the political process.

Ms. Laurie Scott: Okay. Those are very good comments. Thank you so much. I think Bob—

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Garfield Dunlop): Mr. Bailey, do you have a question?

Mr. Robert Bailey: Thank you, Dr. Goodman. My question was on the threshold for government response. I read in somebody's remarks—I don't think it was yours—the United States government looks at 100,000 petition names and then they give an official response. With the population being 10 times whatever, would we be looking at, say, 10,000 here in Ontario, or have you thought about that yet?

Dr. Nicole Goodman: It's hard to say. I'm not an expert on e-petitions, per se, but I would say look to other subnational jurisdictions and see what they're doing. At the national level, the UK and the US, yes, they have a 100,000 threshold.

Mr. Robert Bailey: A hundred thousand?

Dr. Nicole Goodman: A hundred thousand threshold, yes. They both have the same. That was because, in the UK, there was lots of popularity. In the US, they had that

Death Star petition, which I'm sure you've heard about, that was so popular.

So I would say look to other subnational areas; see what they have. In Canada, at the federal level, they've gone ahead with 500 signatures as being sort of the base threshold, and you may want to have more than one threshold: What is the threshold that's going to trigger a written response? What is the threshold that may necessarily trigger a debate in the Legislature?

Mr. Robert Bailey: Okay, thank you.

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Garfield Dunlop): Mr. Natyshak?

Mr. Taras Natyshak: Chair, just to clarify, what's the rotation going to be?

The Clerk of the Committee (Mr. Trevor Day): It's about 13 minutes each.

Mr. Taras Natyshak: So we're just going to keep rotating?

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Garfield Dunlop): Yes, we're just going to try to finish up.

Mr. Taras Natyshak: This is really exciting and thanks for being here. Thanks for the work that you've done. Congratulations on having the largest study in the world on e-petitions—

Dr. Nicole Goodman: Internet voting.

Mr. Taras Natyshak: On Internet voting.

Dr. Nicole Goodman: Internet voting, yes.

Mr. Taras Natyshak: Excellent, wonderful. If you have any information on that study, I'd love to review it. Of course, municipalities in my area of Essex—Kingsville would have been one that—

Dr. Nicole Goodman: They participated in the study.

Mr. Taras Natyshak: They participated? Good. I'd love to look at what their ideas were and to see that.

I don't know where to start. I think we're on the cusp of a whole new generation, a whole new methodology of participation in our democratic system. I believe also it is inevitable that these types of interactions between government and the public will continue to progress and to evolve. I'd love to hear some of your thoughts on ease of use, software, hardware, innovations that will make it easier. The more apps that come about that make it easier to do things are more likely to have greater participation.

I've got so many questions, but when it comes to e-petitions, we have to ensure that they are first and foremost in order to be presented to the Legislature. Would that require a public depository? What would be one of the private e-petition sites? You referenced one of them online.

Dr. Nicole Goodman: Oh, you mean companies that—

Mr. Taras Natyshak: Yes, companies.

Dr. Nicole Goodman: One company that uses e-democracy software is Scytl. It's a Spanish company. I believe they're developing something.

Mr. Taras Natyshak: So would we sign on there and then it would have to be validated by the Legislature? Is there a greater public sentiment to have it authenticated or validated by a public depository as a single point of

contact for e-petitions? And of course, it would segue into e-voting as well. Have you polled the public on what their level of trust is in the security provisions of e-petitions in regard to public entities for that format versus private entities like the one you've referenced?

Dr. Nicole Goodman: Great questions. Thank you.

With respect to the public-private divide, I can speak to the application of Internet voting on that. I am not as well versed in terms of e-petitions, but I think they are very similar. How it works with a private company is, essentially, the Legislature would hire a private company to be the vendor. You folks would design unique features of the system together, and then they would deploy that system for you. Certainly, that's the easier route to take when developing an in-house model, but you have to think about what the public perception is going to be about a private company handling this government service and what the public is going to think about a private company having access to their private information. For example, the House of Commons is going to require that they enter in their name, their address and their email address. If you had the same information being requested in petitions here in Ontario, how would Ontarians feel about a private company having access to that information? That's something to consider.

In the short term, it's probably going to be less costly to go with a private company; in the long term, it depends. Also, with a private company—it's just like Microsoft Word; you're constantly having to buy the newer version and update it. If you have your own in-house version, yes, you'll have to update it, but you'll have more control, and the costs over the long term may be less.

Mr. Taras Natyshak: Great issues to consider.

You referenced weighing online petitions, or e-petitions, versus hard copies, and I think we do that, whether we realize it or not, as legislators. To fill out a hard-copy petition, someone has to actually make the effort to find that petition, sign their name to it and hand it back to whoever is doing that. Conversely, I appreciate having a legible name associated with that person who is petitioning us.

We are entering an era, in terms of technology, where—for the information and for the sake of my colleagues here—news articles are being written at the pace of three news articles every second by robots nowadays. They're compiling information and assimilating and bringing information together, and qualified news sources are actually taking these as legitimate, journalistic articles. My concern is that with that type of technology evolving, how easy will it then be for someone to simply associate themselves with a cause and press one single button and, lo and behold, that's the effort that they have to put forward?

What do you think about those hard parameters that we should, if we are to embark on e-petitions or e-voting—what do you think about that type of effort that is required?

Dr. Nicole Goodman: I definitely think the authentication aspect, being able to identify, for example, if I'm

signing a petition, that I am Nicole Goodman and that I'm not signing two petitions—well, I'm not signing the same petition twice, as myself and as someone else.

As a social scientist, I can't really speak as thoroughly to the security aspects, but I'm happy to refer you to some colleagues who would suggest a suitable computer scientist to come and sit in with you and talk about some of the debates about authentication and what you might consider here in Ontario for the system that you're considering.

I just wanted to add, you mentioned something earlier about knowledge about petitions. If you don't mind this example, one of the things that I noticed from teaching students—one of the classes that I teach is called Political Participation, and the students have to engage in an act of political participation on an issue they're passionate about. They all wanted to do a petition. They said, "I'm going to do an online petition." I said to them, "Well, if you want it to be presented in the Legislature, you can't do an online petition. You have to do an official legislative petition." They threw their hands up in the air and said, "What? That's crazy." I downloaded the guide to writing legislative petitions and gave that to them, and they would say, "Oh, my goodness." I do think that a lot of people—this is just based on my students' knowledge—don't really know a lot about petitions or how they work. So there might be some potential here—because it's going to be on the Internet and hopefully user-friendly and more accessible—to increase knowledge about petitions and make them a little bit less arduous for people who want to start them.

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Mr. Taras Natyshak: The Estonian model: Who delivers that model of online petitions?

Dr. Nicole Goodman: I don't know 100%. I could find out for you. I think it's the government that controls it.

The one thing to keep in mind about the Estonian model—they have a great model, it's very advanced, but their population is so small compared to other populations, so it's easier for them to do. But I can find out for you.

Mr. Taras Natyshak: I'll cede my time to my colleagues. I'm sure I'll come up with something.

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Garfield Dunlop): You've used up about six minutes so far.

Mr. Taras Natyshak: I'm sure I'll come up with some more questions. Thanks so much.

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Garfield Dunlop): Okay. The government members: Mr. Ballard.

Mr. Chris Ballard: Thanks for a great presentation. It's interesting: You hit on a number of the common themes that we've started out with here. We've been struggling with them and have narrowed them down to a number of key issues. You identified them as well, and that's great.

It's interesting, because some of the comments that you made in terms of the reality are ones that—we had Dr. Wiseman here from U of T a couple of weeks ago

and his comments were very interesting because they almost echo what you're saying. He did jokingly refer to himself as a "professional contrarian." Our premise is that considering a suite of e-democracy tools will increase participation in the process. He said, "Take a deep breath and step back. Put the angst on hold. It's not going to markedly increase participation." He was going through all of the reasons why maybe we were a little stressed for no reason, that we need to look at some of the fundamental reasons why people will get involved in the democratic process, as you've found with your students, assigning them the task of getting involved.

He talked about how people are paying attention; they're just busy. Just because they're not political animals like we are here, watching everything that happens, doesn't mean they're not paying attention. It was interesting to look at the information, and the reality, in my mind, sort of validates a bit of what he's saying, but at the same time, from my perspective, it doesn't mean that we put things on hold and we don't progress.

One of the questions we struggle with here, one of the debates we've had—and I don't know if you want to comment on it—is on the division between who is the owner of the debate. Some people around the table would like to see the MPPs in charge of setting the petitions up, putting them on their own websites and then presenting them, and then there are others who are saying, "No, this really should be something that the Ontario Legislative Assembly controls." They're OLA property, and it's part of the government process to move them through. I don't know if you have any comments about that, what model you think might be the best one.

Dr. Nicole Goodman: The way that it works currently, if I understand correctly, you can certainly table a petition yourself. A constituent can approach you and say, "I'd like you to go ahead with this," but overall, it's controlled by the assembly. Is that correct?

Mr. Chris Ballard: Right.

Dr. Nicole Goodman: I would probably recommend that so that it's all sort of together and there is consistency. That would be my recommendation.

Can I add an additional comment based on something that you said?

Mr. Chris Ballard: Please.

Dr. Nicole Goodman: Again, this comes back to voting. I know you're not interested in that, but I really believe that voting is sort of the cornerstone of participation, and I believe these are very interconnected.

In terms of accessibility, right now, we're at a time in our lives where we are seeing citizens wanting more access than ever before. We all know that voter turnout has been declining—everyone knows that—federally and provincially for the past 20, 30 years. What's really interesting is that if you look at the data across Canada—all the provinces, including Ontario, and the national elections—you see that in the wake of this precipitous decline, there has been a dramatic increase like never before in advanced voter turnout—in this province as well, in provinces all across the country. What this tells

me is that people today want access, and they're making use of advance voting because it's more accessible.

When you offer Internet voting in communities—you offer it in those 97 communities, for example, that just had it in the recent elections. In 98% of those communities, it's the preferred ballot choice, even when compared with paper, even in communities where 80% of the residents are elderly. That says to me that people want access.

Mr. Chris Ballard: Okay. Just a question based on that comment: The 98% that say it's now their preferred choice, or in those municipalities that offer it—and you might have mentioned this—was there a significant increase in voter turnout?

Dr. Nicole Goodman: Well, that's the thing—

Mr. Chris Ballard: Was there an increase?

Dr. Nicole Goodman: There is an increase—so if you look at the municipalities that just had the municipal elections, there was an increase, I think, in just over 50% and a decrease in 40-something per cent. There is not going to be an increase all the time.

But voter turnout is so contextual. For example, how many seats are acclaimed? Do you have a charismatic candidate running? Are there important issues?

Mr. Chris Ballard: How angry are people?

Dr. Nicole Goodman: Exactly.

Mr. Chris Ballard: At the end of the day, that's always the greatest motivator for petitions or voting or whatever, unfortunately.

Okay, that was the question I had. I just wanted to get some sense of Legislative Assembly or MPP.

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Garfield Dunlop): Yes, Ms. Wong? Go ahead.

Ms. Soo Wong: Thank you so much for coming this afternoon to give your presentation.

I want to hear a little bit more about Internet voting as well as e-petitions as they relate to a diverse community. From your study and your research work, do you see increasing participation in a large, diverse community like Ontario? Because this is one issue—I live in a riding in Scarborough that's very diverse. How do you engage and get them to participate?

Dr. Nicole Goodman: That, I think, is a very important question, and one that a lot of academics much more senior than myself have not been able to answer. My answer to that question is that I believe there are two broad categorizations of why people don't participate. I believe one relates to apathy and disinterest: People don't care, they're not interested—those types of things. I believe that the other one relates to access. People say that they're too busy.

I'm a mom of two small children. I'm on maternity leave right now. I find it difficult to get out of the house some days. So for me, being able to do things online makes everything so much easier. I think that with these sorts of tools, you're going to appeal to those people who don't participate for accessibility reasons.

But you're not going to be able to get the apathetic. I don't know if there is a recipe to target those people. I

know that various EMBs, concerned citizens' organizations, and not-for-profits have tried different strategies, and I don't know if there is really a clear-cut way of doing that.

But I can tell you, knowing the Ontario public through my Internet voting research, that the rate of Internet penetration in Ontario is very good. Not only do people have access, but they have good-quality access. Even in rural communities, although sometimes good connectivity is an issue, people seem to have gotten around that for the most part, at least in terms of Internet voting. So you have the Internet penetration.

In terms of digital profiles—what that means is people's knowledge level and comfort with the Internet—we see good levels overall in Ontario. But even people who aren't very comfortable with the Internet, who don't use it every day, are still willing to give Internet voting a try, and I bet they would be willing to give e-petitions a try too.

So you have the Internet penetration; you have the digital profile. Finally, I think you have the public attitudes that Ontarians are willing to embrace e-services. I think that's clear through Internet voting. You offer it to a community that maybe has a large senior population. You offer them Internet voting, paper voting and telephone voting, and you see overall that they choose Internet voting. That says something, right?

I think the appetite is here among Ontarians to make use of these types of services. It just has to be done properly, incrementally.

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Garfield Dunlop): Mr. Balkissoon, do you have a question?

Mr. Bas Balkissoon: Thank you very much for your presentation. It was well put together to outline the issues we should be considering. We've been going through this quite a bit. I'm very keen on receiving your report on e-voting. If I could get a copy, I'd love it.

In e-voting, I'm interested in the security part, because it would apply to the petition part also, if you want to have a true system where you know that the data you're collecting is valid data and somebody didn't bomb the system.

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I was interested in the two parts that you talked about, that I have information in my head and I have a device to put the two together. In the e-voting that took place in Ontario, how many municipalities used the two-step security process?

Dr. Nicole Goodman: The two-factor authentication? None of them did.

Mr. Bas Balkissoon: None of them?

Dr. Nicole Goodman: No.

Mr. Bas Balkissoon: And that's my concern. Like Estonia—I come from a very small country; we have 1.2 million people. Everyone over 18 years old has an ID that is provided to them by the government, and you can only vote when you present that ID with your photograph on it and your fingerprint. That's the security. We've been struggling here with how we get the security. I'm not a

supporter of e-voting until you improve the security. I also come from a country where we know how to rig the system. I could teach you all.

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Garfield Dunlop): Tell us more now.

Mr. Bas Balkissoon: I warn my colleagues all the time that you have to look at the security first. If you don't have it, you would not have a valid process. I would be interested in knowing more how that two-step process works and how many variations of it are available that you're aware of.

Dr. Nicole Goodman: Again, my research focuses mainly on the attitudinal, the social science impacts, but I knew that I was coming here and I thought it would be helpful to at least present some of the security arguments.

Mr. Bas Balkissoon: I'm happy you did.

Dr. Nicole Goodman: I can speak to the Internet voting models at the municipal level. But if security is a concern, then I think what I said about policy is really important for you folks to consider. I tried to find if the city of Toronto was doing e-petitions, but I couldn't find anything.

Mr. Bas Balkissoon: No, they don't.

Dr. Nicole Goodman: But maybe they will be. So if you're going to go ahead with this, I think it's important to think about introducing policies that could be applied at the municipal level. What we see right now in terms of Internet voting is a hodgepodge of application. The province writes the Municipal Elections Act, but beyond that, municipalities have a certain level of autonomy in terms of delivering and executing an election and deciding what they want to go ahead with. Likewise, with respect to e-petitions, I think having those policies in place would be really important.

Mr. Bas Balkissoon: When the province allowed e-voting, I had concerns. I raised them. I can see e-voting working very well in a rural community where the transportation and the distance to travel to vote is a real issue. You're helping the voter there, so access becomes a real benefit. But in the urban centre, where travel to a voting station is not an issue, then e-voting, without 100% confidence in your security, I have a lot of difficulty with. That's my concern. So if I could get any material from you regarding the two-step process, how it works, whose technology it is or what ideas there are, I would love to learn that for myself. I have an interest, as we go through this process, to ensure that we put that security in place.

I do agree with you: When e-voting was put out by the Ministry of Municipal Affairs, it was wide open and left to the municipality to decide how they want it because that's what the Association of Municipalities of Ontario requested. I don't think a lot of them have verified the security in the voting process that they have adopted.

I've paid attention, and I don't think there are a lot of urban centres that have gone to e-voting in a significant way. They've tried it in a pilot, but they have not expanded it to everybody else. I think the only one that did it recently is Ajax.

Dr. Nicole Goodman: Ajax, Markham—

Mr. Bas Balkissoon: Markham is still a pilot, and it's very small.

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Garfield Dunlop): I just want to let you know that we've used up your time, 14 minutes. Not that we're being very flexible here, but we are going to get some other questions here. To the official opposition.

Ms. Laurie Scott: If you want to follow up for another couple of minutes, I will kindly donate time. Granville, do you want to? I'm on the record as a nice person offering my time.

Mr. Granville Anderson: Thank you, Dr. Goodman, for an excellent presentation.

Dr. Nicole Goodman: Thank you for having me.

Mr. Granville Anderson: I noticed you alluded to certain demographics, like 55 and over, that would participate more, and a certain income level, higher income. I thought the whole premise behind this process was to get younger people to participate and to get people at lower income levels to participate. How would we get their interest? How would we get them involved in the process? Right now, 55 and over, they are the people who usually vote. They are the people who will take the time to do that, I guess. It's not disparaging or anything. They have more time to dedicate to that kind of process.

Mr. Bas Balkissoon: They're more engaged.

Mr. Granville Anderson: Yes, we're not engaging the whole segment of society. Have you looked into that, or do you have an answer for that?

Dr. Nicole Goodman: Like I said before, it's very difficult to get the apathetic to participate. So if the reason people aren't participating is because of apathy, then it's very challenging to do that.

Some of the things that can be done are information, education and outreach to young people, letting them know this is available now. If you have a grievance, if there is an issue that you're passionate about—do you care about the environment in your local community? Maybe you want to protest the building of something or something like that. You can come forward, and you can complete this petition.

With respect to people from lower incomes, they may not have access to computers or the Internet. I think it's really important to ensure that the system would be accessible from public access points, such as libraries, Internet cafés, those sorts of things, which I assume that it would be. So ensure that people can access it from all over. You may want to consider an application, an app. I thought that was a great idea.

I also wanted to add, like I've mentioned before, that if it would please the committee, I'm happy to put the committee Clerk in touch with a computer security expert who has done work on e-petitions who could come in and talk to you specifically about authentication and the type of authentication that you might consider here in Ontario for the adoption of e-petitions. I think that would be beneficial for everyone—

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Garfield Dunlop): Okay, thank you very much.

Mr. Granville Anderson: Thank you. Thank you for the time, Laurie.

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Garfield Dunlop): You're good neighbours.

Ms. Laurie Scott: You're welcome. You've been excellent. I've been listening to the conversations.

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Garfield Dunlop): I'd now like to go over to the third party for more questions.

Mr. Taras Natyshak: Do they have more time left?

Ms. Laurie Scott: No, it's okay.

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Garfield Dunlop): They're not using any more time.

Mr. Taras Natyshak: You're not using more time? Okay.

Just a couple of quick questions. Have you studied the global rate of modernization in other similar developed countries when it comes to e-petitions or e-voting? Who is taking it up? What is the rate at which they're taking it up? Is it coming online pretty quickly, or are other jurisdictions still struggling with the same issues that we would be as a subnational jurisdiction?

Dr. Nicole Goodman: Great questions, thank you. I can speak to both of them. With respect to e-voting, we saw quite a large uptake about a decade ago, particularly in European jurisdictions. Countries and regional jurisdictions were jumping on it because everyone thought that it was going to be this quick fix for the democratic deficit, to get people really engaged.

Now we only really see growth in three areas in the world. We're seeing growth in Estonia; they're continuing to do Internet voting. They use it for their local elections, their national elections and their extra-parliamentary elections.

We see growth in Switzerland. They use it for their cantonal elections, which is the equivalent of the provincial elections here.

Then we see growth in Canada. A quarter of Ontario electors had an option of voting online in the municipal elections, and it's expected that that is going to more than double in the next election cycle, so by 2018.

So why have all the other jurisdictions sort of pulled out, and why aren't they going ahead with it? Because they're largely resigned that it's not going to be that quick fix, it's not going to repair the democratic deficit. Also in Europe there are a lot of fears of the Internet associated with security. Strain on budgets because of the recession in 2008 has been another reason.

With respect to e-petitions, I'm not as well versed, but from what I looked at, it seems again that European jurisdictions were more inclined to jump on it. However, the uptake of e-petitions seems to have been slower than e-voting. Again, I'm not as well versed, but I don't see the same drop-off there. We slowly see other jurisdictions adopting it.

An example would be that e-voting has been in Canada since 2003, and e-petitions are relatively newer. I think Quebec adopted them in 2008, and the Northwest Territories I'm not exactly sure when, but they haven't been around for as long.

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Mr. Taras Natyshak: Are you aware that the standing orders of this House prohibit us, as legislators, to have electronic devices in the chamber?

Dr. Nicole Goodman: No. I thought that had been changed.

Mr. Taras Natyshak: No. It is at the discretion of the Speaker to either allow us—there's a pilot project happening right now. We all have our phones, but some also have iPads. So that would have to change. Well, it wouldn't have to, but it would certainly facilitate the implementation of e-petitions. That's just for your information.

I will leave you with this, and I will cede my time to the Chair: I am encouraged by this single and singular figure that I quickly accessed on my phone, where all the answers are held, through Google, to all of the world's questions. In the most recent US presidential election, 122 million people voted, and I am encouraged to know that, in contrast, 132 million people voted for the winner of the American Idol contest, given that it was a little bit easier, I would imagine, to vote for the American idol than it was for the American President. In terms of getting to those disenfranchised voters, maybe we need better singers as our legislative representatives, but I definitely think there is something to be said about access and accessibility to voting that enables greater participation.

Dr. Nicole Goodman: May I very, very briefly make one quick comment to what you just said?

Mr. Taras Natyshak: Absolutely.

Dr. Nicole Goodman: I think it's important to think about e-petitions not on their own, but—and this relates to your comments—as part of a broader trend towards the modernization of political institutions, particularly Legislatures. I say this with respect to Internet voting too. Don't think about it in isolation; think about this as part and parcel of a broader trend toward modernization: e-petitions, e-voting, being able to use electronic devices in the Legislature—

Mr. Taras Natyshak: Welcome to the 21st century.

Dr. Nicole Goodman: Exactly, yes. Think about how you would envision digital and mobile technologies making the institution of the Ontario Legislature work better for the members who are within it, the staff and also the people of Ontario.

Mr. Taras Natyshak: Very good. Thank you for being here today.

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Garfield Dunlop): Are there any other comments here? We've got a couple of minutes. Yes, Ms. McMahon?

Ms. Eleanor McMahon: Just a quick comment. Thank you so much for your presentation. I think you're hearing from all sides the enthusiasm for the research you've done and how interesting it is.

I found one of your comments particularly interesting, and it kind of builds on my colleague's comments. It has to do with ease of transaction. Just in parenthesis, it's part of what's changing a lot of the dynamics around

fundraising these days. I used to work at United Way, for example, and United Ways are finding themselves in a bit of a challenge right now, because their fundraising model is changing so rapidly. Part of that has to do with technology, and changing moods around what's important in terms of social causes and so on.

It seems to me the same dynamics are shaping this. If we want to engage the disenfranchised, then two things strike me: (a) Maybe we're barking up the wrong tree with this, or (b) This doesn't seem like the ideal path to get there. I know you're not saying "Don't do it." It seems like you're almost saying to us, and correct me if I'm wrong, of course, "Maybe you need to modify your expectations a little bit in terms of what the outcomes are." Does that make sense?

Dr. Nicole Goodman: Yes. Thank you for your comment. I guess what I'm trying to say is the headline that I copied and pasted on the third slide. I wouldn't come out in the news media and say, "Ontario Legislature Introduces e-Petitions to Dramatically Improve Participation." I would say, "The Ontario Legislature is introducing e-petitions to improve accessibility and convenience for citizens, to focus on more citizen-centred service for their constituents, to add to more procedural transparency," so maybe "The Ontario Legislature is moving toward open government" in different respects. This could be seen as part of that in terms of being more open, more accountable, because people can track petitions online. Or "The Ontario Legislature is moving forward with this because they want to show a leadership role in e-government. They recognize that Quebec and the Northwest Territories are doing this. As the largest province in the country, they're going to move forward with this and hopefully set a leadership standard, not only for other provinces that have yet to adopt this, but also for the 444 municipalities that rest within its borders."

Ms. Eleanor McMahon: Interesting. Thank you.

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Garfield Dunlop): Thank you very much, everyone. Dr. Goodman, thank you very much for your time here today. We really appreciate your filling in. Is there anything anyone else has to ask? Mr. Barrett?

Mr. Toby Barrett: No.

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Garfield Dunlop): So you can be excused, or you can sit and watch us for the rest of the day. I know how much you like this.

Dr. Nicole Goodman: Thank you so much for having me. I used to be, a long time ago, an intern here at Queen's Park, through the OLIP program.

Interjections.

Dr. Nicole Goodman: I worked for Kevin Flynn and for Tim Hudak, so I had an interesting internship experience, yes.

Ms. Laurie Scott: Thank you for coming back.

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Garfield Dunlop): Thank you very much.

Dr. Nicole Goodman: Thank you very much for having me.

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Garfield Dunlop): Good luck. Certainly, you've done well in your career. You have your PhD; you've done something right.

Mr. Barrett.

COMMITTEE BUSINESS

Mr. Toby Barrett: Chair, we drafted copies of a motion I'd like to distribute to committee members. If the wording is okay, I would like to make a motion.

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Garfield Dunlop): Okay. Go ahead and move your motion.

Mr. Toby Barrett: I'm going to continue with that if that's okay, Chair. I don't know if everybody has got a copy yet.

Chair, I move that the Clerk, in consultation with the committee Chair, be authorized to arrange the following with regard to Bill 27, Provincial Framework and Action Plan concerning Emerging Vector-Borne and Zoonotic Diseases Act, 2014:

—The committee shall meet at its next regularly scheduled meeting day for the purpose of public hearings;

—Following public hearings, the committee shall meet at its next regularly scheduled meeting day for one day of clause-by-clause consideration;

—Notice of public hearings on the Ontario Parliamentary Channel, the Legislative Assembly's website, and Canada NewsWire; and

—That the deadline for requests to appear be 12 noon on Friday, May 29, 2015;

—That following the deadline, the Clerk of the Committee provide the members of the subcommittee with a list of requests to appear;

—That the members of the subcommittee prioritize and return the list by 4 p.m. on Friday, May 29, 2015;

—That the Clerk of the Committee schedule witnesses from those prioritized lists; and

—Each witness will receive up to five minutes for their presentation, followed by nine minutes for questions from committee members;

—The deadline for written submission is 6 p.m. on the final day of public hearings;

—That the research office provide a summary of the presentations by 5 p.m. on Friday of the same week following public hearings; and

—The deadline for filing amendments to the bill with the Clerk of the Committee shall be 12 noon two sessional days preceding the scheduled meeting for clause-by-clause; and

—That following consideration of Bill 27, the committee resume its consideration of e-petitions.

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Garfield Dunlop): You've all heard that. Questions? Any comments on it?

Mr. Toby Barrett: I could comment briefly. With the normal process, I would expect amendments. I have worked with the Ministry of Health a bit on this. They've suggested one area of amendments that I'm comfortable with.

I also know that as far as witnesses—obviously, from this we do not have much time to notify people to come forward as witnesses. But I do know that Soo, for example, during one of our subcommittee meetings, brought forward several names of public health organizations. Michael Mantha has done a tremendous amount of work on this and is very closely aligned with some of the Lyme disease organizations.

I would just throw that out. If this passed, time would be of the essence to make sure that we notify key people to come out. There may be someone suffering from Lyme or West Nile virus or someone with concerns around Ebola. It doesn't focus on any particular infectious disease.

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Garfield Dunlop): Okay. Thank you. Any other questions on it? All those in favour of it?

Mr. Michael Mantha: Can I call for a recess?

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Garfield Dunlop): You can have up to 20 minutes. What would you like?

Mr. Michael Mantha: Ten.

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Garfield Dunlop): Ten? We'll have a 10-minute recess. We'll be back at 2:10.

The committee recessed from 1400 to 1410.

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Garfield Dunlop): Okay, everybody, we have to do the vote now. We have to do the vote. So thank you very much for reconvening.

All those in favour?

Ms. Laurie Scott: Sorry, Chair. Just before we start—

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Garfield Dunlop): We can have a recorded vote.

Ms. Laurie Scott: Yes, please.

Ayes

Anderson, Balkissoon, Ballard, Barrett, Mantha, McMahan, Scott, Wong.

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Garfield Dunlop): None opposed. So it's all in favour. It's carried.

Yes, Mr. Mantha?

Mr. Michael Mantha: Chair, in the spirit of good faith that I've just experienced here—I'm going to be quite happy to finally have a discussion on this particular bill. I know my friend here has put in a lot of work, and I'm looking forward to working with him.

In that spirit, I'd like to move a motion that, as quickly as we can, in the same format that he has presented—that at the earliest possible time we discuss Bill 64, Ms. Peggy Sattler's intern bill.

Interjections.

Mr. Michael Mantha: I believe it's 64, the internship.

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Garfield Dunlop): You haven't prepared a motion?

Mr. Michael Mantha: It's coming.

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Garfield Dunlop): Pardon?

Mr. Michael Mantha: It's on its way.

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Garfield Dunlop): Okay. So you're referring to Bill 64, An Act to amend the Ministry

of Training, Colleges and Universities Act and the Employment Standards Act, 2000, by Peggy Sattler?

Mr. Michael Mantha: Yes. If you can give me five minutes, I can go get it. It should be prepared in about five minutes.

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Garfield Dunlop): With the permission of the committee, can we recess for another five minutes? I don't see any problems with that. Do you want a five-minute recess?

Mr. Michael Mantha: I don't know. Does the committee want more?

Hold on. We're making a decision over there; we're not sure. We're smiling. Everyone looks like they're co-operative here.

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Garfield Dunlop): I'm going to go with a five-minute recess.

The committee recessed from 1412 to 1417.

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Garfield Dunlop): We'll reconvene.

Mr. Michael Mantha: I move that the Clerk, in consultation with the Chair, be authorized to arrange the following with regard to Bill 64, Protecting Interns and Creating a Learning Economy Act, 2015:

(1) One day of public hearings on the next sessional day following clause-by-clause on Bill 27 at Queen's Park;

(2) One day of clause-by-clause consideration on the next sessional day following hearings on Bill 64;

(3) Notice of public hearings on the Ontario parliamentary channel, the Legislative Assembly's website, and Canada NewsWire;

(4) That the deadline for requests to appear be 12 noon on the Friday prior to clause-by-clause consideration of Bill 27; and

(5) That following the deadline, the Clerk of the Committee provide the members of the subcommittee with a list of requests to appear; and

(6) That the members of the subcommittee prioritize and return the list by 5 p.m. on Monday following the deadline;

(7) Each witness will receive up to five minutes for their presentation, followed by nine minutes for questions from committee members;

(8) The deadline for written submissions is 6 p.m. on the final day of public hearings;

(9) The deadline for filing amendments with the Clerk of the Committee be at 5 p.m. on the day following public hearings.

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Garfield Dunlop): Would you like to speak to it?

Mr. Michael Mantha: I just want to add to what I just witnessed here earlier. It was a good step forward by bringing an important issue which I have been working on, along with my friend Mr. Barrett here, for a very long time. There are a lot of Ontarians who are suffering from vector-borne diseases, and I was quite pleased to see this moving forward in a spirit of co-operation.

Once again, we have an opportunity here to take advantage of another group of individuals, young-minded individuals, who have been taken advantage of for a very long time across this province. We have an opportunity to address that concern as well. It's in the spirit, I stress, of what I saw here earlier that I bring this amendment and this motion forward to hopefully get the support from the committee and we can have the discussions on it.

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Garfield Dunlop): Any further debate? I'm going to call the vote.

All those in favour of this motion? Opposed?

I'm sorry, Mr. Mantha; the motion doesn't carry today.

Anything else, for the good of the committee? With that, we're adjourned.

The committee adjourned at 1420.

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Vice-Chair / Vice-Président

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Mr. Granville Anderson (Durham L)

Mr. Bas Balkissoon (Scarborough–Rouge River L)

Mr. Chris Ballard (Newmarket–Aurora L)

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Ms. Soo Wong (Scarborough–Agincourt L)

Substitutions / Membres remplaçants

Mr. Taras Natyshak (Essex ND)

Also taking part / Autres participants et participantes

Mr. Robert Bailey (Sarnia–Lambton PC)

Clerk / Greffier

Mr. Trevor Day

Staff / Personnel

Ms. Joanne McNair, Table Research Clerk,
Table Research