

CONSTITUTION

of the

ONTARIO NDP WOMEN'S COMMITTEE

Historical Background

In December, 1972, at the Ontario NDP Convention, a resolution was adopted that called on the Party to establish a permanent, official Women's Committee, with access to the resources of the Party and empowered to carry out education activities within the Party, call conferences, actively support women's groups, encourage women candidates to run for office, etc.

A year later (in December, 1973) about one hundred women met in conference at Bolton, and a structure for this committee was adopted. The structure was based on representation from nine specified areas, plus an equal number of members of the Provincial Executive. This structure proved unworkable, mainly because distance, lack of travelling expenses and other Party commitments make regular business meetings on a balanced regional basis impossible, given the geography of Ontario.

In September, 1976, the Metro NDP Women's Committee called a group of women together from across the province to discuss policy. At this policy session it was decided that a committee should be struck to look into ways of providing a workable structure for the provincial committee. This steering committee proposed the following constitution to provide the ONDP Women's Committee with a workable mode of operation. The following constitution was adopted at a founding conference of the ONDP Women's Committee held in Toronto April 23-24, 1977, and amended at the first and second annual conferences, in 1978 and 1980.

1. Purpose of the Committee

1. To increase the participation of women in the Party at all levels.
To educate women in the NDP in all aspects of political activity.
To develop policy recommendations.
To monitor and influence legislation according to Party policy.
2. To participate with women outside the Party in areas of mutual interest, and encourage these women to join the Party and work with the Party.
To assist the Party in developing a strategy to attract the female vote.

2. Name of the Organization

The name of the organization shall be the Ontario NDP Women's Committee.

3. Terms of Reference

As per the constitution of the Ontario NDP and current practice, i.e. the Women's Committee is a committee of Provincial Council, with one member of the Provincial Executive designated as liaison, in consultation with the Women's Committee.

4. Membership

Membership in the Women's Committee is open to all members of the ONDP.

5. The Executive

The Executive of the ONDP Women's Committee shall consist of:

- i) the following table officers:
 - president
 - vice-president
 - secretary
 - treasurer
 - communications co-ordinator
- ii) up to ten members-at-large
- iii) chairpersons of local action committees
- iv) the following ex-officio members:
 - Provincial Executive liaison
 - P.O.W. representative
 - NDP Caucus representative

The table officers and members-at-large shall be elected at the annual conference. (N.B. the Provincial Executive liaison and the P.O.W. representative are elected at provincial convention.)

The duties of the table officers shall be as follows:

President

- To call meetings of the Executive.
- To co-ordinate the day-to-day business of the Committee.
- To act as spokeswoman for the Committee.
- To maintain close contact with the liaison member of the Provincial Executive.

Secretary

- To keep a record of all meetings.
- To reply to correspondence.
- To write such letters as are initiated by the Committee.

Treasurer

- To keep the Committee's books and present audited statements.

Communications Co-ordinator

Responsible for the phoning committee, for keeping up-to-date mailing list and card file, and for seeking out and maintaining contact with individuals, groups and organizations which should be aware of the activities of the Committee.

In accordance with the aims listed under Purpose of the Committee, each member-at-large shall be responsible for co-ordinating one area of the Committee's activities, such as:

- Trade Union Liaison
- Outreach: Women's Groups
- Outreach: Ethnic Minority Women
- Liaison with ONDP Youth Committee
- Newsletter
- Policy
- Legislation
- Internal Affirmative Action
- Liaison with Local NDP Women's Action Committees

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The Executive shall meet a minimum of eight times a year. Chairpersons of local action committees are encouraged to attend these meetings whenever possible, but are not required to attend all or any of them if distance makes it impractical.

An ~~executive~~ ^{three} member who is absent from two consecutive meetings without good cause shall be deemed to have vacated her/his position.

The Executive has the authority to co-opt members into vacant positions.

Sub-committees may be set up to share the work of a particular responsibility and/or to deal with specific areas of interest (i.e. newsletter editorial board, phoning committee, policy committee, etc.)

6. Local Action Committees

Our objective is to have local action committees functioning in all areas of the province. Local action committees may be established on a single riding or multi-riding basis, or may be attached to an area council of the ONDP. Where such action committees exist, the chairperson will be the liaison with the Executive of the Women's Committee.

7. Annual Meeting

The Women's Committee shall meet in conference once a year, wherever possible prior to the federal or provincial convention.

8. Procedures

The Women's Committee shall adopt such rules and regulations as it deems necessary for the conduct of its business; but, in all matters not governed by these rules and regulations, Roberts Rules of Order shall govern.

9. Amendments

This constitution may be amended at an annual meeting by a two-thirds majority of those participants present and voting. Any such amendment must be forwarded to the ONDP constitution committee for approval.

10. Priority

Nothing in this constitution shall be construed to violate the constitution of the ONDP.

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