

## **PROVISION FOR INDEPENDENT MEMBERS DURING QUESTION TIME IN OTHER LEGISLATURES**

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### **BACKGROUND**

This supplementary briefing note is prepared for Members of the Committee on Procedures of the Northern Ireland (NI) Assembly, to facilitate their understanding of provisions for Independent Members during Oral Question Time in other Legislatures. A number of Legislatures have been identified and their procedures are outlined below.

### **HOUSE OF COMMONS OF THE CANADIAN PARLIAMENT, OTTAWA**

In the House of Commons of the Canadian Parliament, the rotation of questions during Question Time is largely negotiated by the various political parties and depends heavily on the proportion of seats each party holds. Independent Members or Members from a political party not recognised in the House (a party must hold 12 seats to be officially recognised) also get to pose questions, but it is usually at the very end of question period and they do not get a supplementary question. As with the other opposition parties, a calculation is done to determine what percentage of the opposition is comprised of Independent Members. As they do not have a Whip to submit their names to the Speaker, they contact the Speaker directly when they wish to pose a question.

### **NOVA SCOTIA HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY**

The Nova Scotia House of Assembly has three sessions of Question Time Per legislative week. The first question of Question Time is available to the Official Opposition and is usually asked by the Leader of the Official Opposition. By custom the second question goes to the other opposition party and is usually asked by the Leader thereof. From this point, questions are allotted on the basis of the mathematical ratio between the opposition parties. The Nova Scotia House of Assembly has one Independent Member and he is allowed to pose one question at the end of one of the Question Time periods.