

News Release

January 30, 2008

SASK PARTY SCRAPS SASKATCHEWAN COUNCIL ON DISABILITY ISSUES

The NDP is demanding to know what has happened to the Saskatchewan Council on Disability Issues. Several reliable sources have confirmed that the Sask Party has disbanded the council.

The council, established in 1999 by the NDP government, has improved the lives of hundred's of people with disabilities.

“In a news release last month, Social Services Minister Donna Harpauer said one of the responsibilities of her ministry is to co-ordinate, develop, promote and implement social, economic and other policies and programs for the benefit of persons with disabilities in Saskatchewan.” NDP Disability Issues Critic David Forbes said. “One month later, we find the Sask Party is scrapping the council, without so much as a news release explaining why.”

Until recently, the 12-member council provided advice and input to the government on issues affecting people with disabilities. It also had a significant impact in the development of a government-wide Disability Action Plan and the recently announced *Disability Inclusion Policy Framework*, now in jeopardy. All members of the council had direct experience with disabilities.

“I must say that this action without any public notice, when coupled with the absolute lack of any reference to disability issues in the recent Wall Throne Speech sends a very clear and troubling signal that persons with disabilities are not a priority at all for the new government. This is simply unacceptable,” Forbes said.

Forbes has outlined his concerns in a letter to Social Services Minister Donna Harpauer.