

# NOVA SCOTIA

## AN EQUAL VOICE PROVINCE SNAPSHOT, 2026

Nova Scotia (N.S.) has not yet had a woman serve as premier, and its legislature has not yet achieved gender parity by having women make up at least half of its MLAs. The Nova Scotia House of Assembly seats 55 members, of which 20 are women and gender diverse people (36.4%). N.S.'s last election took place in November 2024.



**Population**  
1,090,074



**Female to Male**  
51.2% : 48.8%



**GDP**  
\$47.7+ billion

### GOVERNANCE STRUCTURE

N.S. has a unicameral legislature, with one chamber: the **Nova Scotia House of Assembly**. As a parliamentary democracy, N.S. has 55 constituencies which are each represented by an elected **Member of the Legislative Assembly (MLA)**.

The political party with the most elected MLAs forms government, and their leader becomes the head of government, called the **Premier**. The Premier selects MLAs to serve as Cabinet Ministers.

The **Lieutenant Governor of Nova Scotia** is appointed by the Governor General of Canada and represents the King, Canada's Head of State.



### CURRENT EXECUTIVE ADMINISTRATION

(as of Mar 2025)

**Premier:** Tim Houston (M)  
**Assumed office:** 31 Aug. 2021  
**Party:** Progressive Conservative Party of N.S.

21 Cabinet Members  
7 women (33.3%) : 14 men (66.7%)

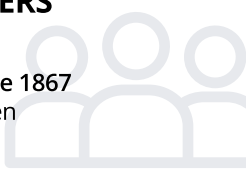
#### Notable portfolios currently held by women:

- Deputy Premier
- Attorney General and Minister of Justice
- Seniors and Long-term Care
- Military Relations
- Emergency Management
- Health & Wellness
- Cyber Security & Digital Solutions
- African Nova Scotian Affairs

### PAST PREMIERS

(as of Mar 2025)

29 Premiers since 1867  
0 women : 29 men



### CURRENT LEGISLATURE

(as of Mar 2025)

55 MLAs total  
19 women (34.6%) : 35 men (63.6%)  
1 gender-diverse person (1.8%)

#### MLAS PER PARTY

**Progressive Conservative Party of N.S.:** 42 MLAs  
11 women (26.2%) : 31 men (73.8%)

**N.S. New Democratic Party:** 9 MLAs  
6 women (66.7%) : 2 men (22.2%) :  
1 gender diverse person (11.1%)

**N.S. Liberal Party:** 3 MLAs  
1 woman (33.3%) : 2 men (66.7%)

**Independent MLAs:** 1 woman



### LIEUTENANT GOVERNORS

(as of Mar 2025)

34 Lieutenant Governors since 1867  
2 women : 32 men

**Current Lieutenant Governor:**  
Mike Savage (M)

## MILESTONES

**1960**

Gladys Porter was the first woman MLA elected in N.S.

**1980**

Alexa McDonough was the first woman to lead a N.S. political party.

**1985**

Maxine Cochran was the first woman named to Cabinet in N.S.

**1998**

Yvonne Atwell was the first Black woman MLA elected in N.S.

**2000**

Myra Freeman was the first woman to be appointed Lieutenant Governor of N.S.

**2013**

Diana Whalen was the first woman deputy premier of N.S.

**2021**

N.S.'s 2021 election saw a record number of women and gender diverse people win seats in the province's legislature, with 20 women and gender diverse MLAs out of 55 (36.4%). This is the highest proportion of women and gender diverse MLAs in Nova Scotia's history, tied with the results of the 2024 election.

**2023**

Karla MacFarlane was the first woman Speaker of the N.S. House of Assembly

**2024**

Claudia Chender was the first woman elected Leader of the Opposition in N.S.