

NDP Caucus News

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O’Leary Calls for Investment in Artists and Creative Workers

NL NDP MHA Sheilagh O’Leary (St. John’s East–Quidi Vidi) is calling on the PC government to demonstrate a real commitment to artists by adopting the NDP’s policy to top up Arts NL grants to match Year of the Arts funding levels.

The call comes after the Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure confirmed that the PC government will not proceed with the mid-sized theatre in St. John’s that was announced by the former government. O’Leary is now asking what plan, if any, the PCs have to support artists, noting that their platform included no commitments to the arts sector.

“This community is full of bright, passionate people who are dedicated to telling the stories of our province. We have artists who have chosen to move here because of our rich arts culture,” said O’Leary. “But the reality is that many of these artists are struggling to put food on the table and pay their rent. Artists are essential to the fabric of our province, and while a new building would be nice in theory, what’s needed right now is direct investment in artists so they can continue their work.”

O’Leary says the NDP’s plan to invest in the arts would not only help more artists access grants, but it would also create more job and professional development opportunities at all stages of an artist’s career.

“Arts NL’s current grant funding sits at \$5 million. Our commitment would increase that by an additional \$2.7 million, allowing more artists to receive funding for their projects and creating more jobs and opportunities across the sector,” said O’Leary. “If the PCs truly believe in job creation, as they claim, then they must also recognize the value of the creative economy and invest in ensuring artists can build careers here at home.”

O’Leary added that this investment, combined with the NDP’s commitment to advocate for a pilot Guaranteed Basic Livable Income program in Newfoundland and Labrador, would represent a meaningful step toward supporting and stabilizing the arts community and ensuring creatives in the province know they are valued – not treated as an afterthought.

You can read more about the NDP arts commitment here: <https://nl.ndp.ca/ndp-committed-to-increasing-arts-funding-creating-more-job-opportunities-for-artists/>

-30-

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