

# NDP Caucus News

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## **Minister Backing Away from Police Oversight Commitment Troubling**

Newfoundland and Labrador NDP MHA Sheilagh O’Leary (St. John’s East–Quidi Vidi) says the Minister of Justice’s sudden reversal on the need for a police oversight board is deeply concerning. O’Leary is calling on the Minister to either honour her commitment or clearly explain to the public why she is now backing away from it.

O’Leary points to the long-recognized need for a police oversight board that includes civilians and members of the public as a way to rebuild public trust and confidence in the police force. She notes that the groundwork has already been laid through First Voice’s 2022 report, and says it is now time to implement those recommendations.

“A police oversight board is needed now more than ever – not only to maintain public confidence in our policing system, but to strengthen and transform how policing is done in this province,” said O’Leary. “This is about ensuring the right resources and clear guidelines are in place, so police have the tools they need to keep everyone in our province safe. Police oversight benefits all of us.”

“Civilian-led oversight is imperative to ensure the necessary voices are at the table,” said O’Leary. “This is an Indigenous issue, as the First Voice report’s recommendations would lay the groundwork for implementing MMIWG Calls for Justice 5.7 and 9.2(iii) in this province. It is also a women’s issue, at a time when many women feel unheard or are afraid to turn to police for help. These voices must be at the table when we are discussing how to ensure safety for all communities.”

During the election, the PCs campaigned on building safer communities, and O’Leary says continued delays to police oversight run directly counter to that promise.

“We have had the First Voice report since 2022. Now, four years later, after championing the idea of a civilian-led oversight board, the minister is backing away and claiming more work needs to be done. How much longer are we prepared to let this be kicked down the road? This is about accountability, safety, and collaboration, and it is important that the minister clearly explain why she is now standing in opposition to those values.”

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