

NDP Caucus News

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NDP Prioritizes Housing in the House of Assembly

Today in the House of Assembly, NDP Leader Jim Dinn (St. John's Centre) and MHA Sheilagh O'Leary (St. John's East-Quidi Vidi) pressed government to commit to addressing the dire housing needs for people in this province.

Dinn began by raising questions about the need for meaningful investment in non-market social housing, as well as increased funding for social services to help ensure more people are able to remain housed.

"Speaker, in his keynote address to the Canadian Housing Renewal Association conference in St. John's, Dr. Andrew Boozary, a primary care physician, stated that as social spending decreases, spending on health care increases," Dinn said. "I ask the Minister of Social Supports and Well Being, what will be the increase in social spending in his department?"

"Speaker, in the same presentation, Dr. Boozary noted that the number of Canada's social rental housing units completed per year declined from a high of over 30,000 in 1972 to less than 3,000 in 2010. A Scotiabank report in 2023 stated that, 'A doubling of social housing stock could help those in greatest need.' I ask the minister, while he has committed to building 10,000 affordable housing units in five years, will he also commit to at least doubling the NLHC housing stock?"

O'Leary followed, asking specifically about ensuring women facing intimate partner violence have access to safe, stable housing, and pressing for a timeline on when rent control will be introduced.

"Speaker, women experiencing intimate partner violence are already facing immense barriers when trying to leave abusive situations. Too often, the lack of safe, affordable housing is what forces them to stay. We heard this clearly at the housing conference this week. I ask the Minister: did you advocate at the Cabinet table for increased funding in this budget for women's shelters and the non-profit organizations that support survivors in finding safe housing?"

"Speaker, while landlords can only increase rent once a year, there is no cap on the amount they can increase it. A senior woman in my district living in a REIT called my office inconsolable because she cannot afford her rent increasing an extra \$250 in one year. Will the Minister commit to bringing in rent caps and vacancy controls so that people are not forced into homelessness as a result of excessive rent increases?"

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