



HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY  
Newfoundland and Labrador

**James Dinn, M.H.A.**  
**District of St. John's Centre**

May 23, 2026

Dear Premier Wakeham,

I wrote to you and the Leader of the Official Opposition on Friday with the sincere hope that we, as leaders of our parties, could meet to discuss how we could restore decorum and goodwill to the House of Assembly. I hoped that the three of us could issue a joint statement of solidarity on this matter. Frankly, your response was disappointing and discouraging.

While the Leader of the Official Opposition responded he would be interested in meeting, you responded with an official letter repeating your grievances and calling on us to have our house leaders meet with the Speaker of the House to seek a path forward. As I indicated in my reply, the matter had gone beyond the House Leader level and required us as leaders to show leadership, a united front, and a common purpose.

The decision of your office to issue a news release on your letter indicates this was nothing more than a political exercise for your party. The comments in the media by your House Leader and the Member for Lake Melville indicate the problem lies with your party and its leadership.

The Member for Mount Scio immediately withdrew her offensive remarks regarding the Premier and apologised — twice. Elvis Loveless, the Member for Fortune Bay-Cape La Hune called my colleague, Sheilagh O'Leary, to apologise if his actions caused her distress. He repeated that apology publicly during a media interview. It was an honourable action. Your House Leader, on the other hand, did not. He was dismissive of MHA O'Leary's reaction to the incident, accused her of grandstanding, and took the opportunity to again air his party's grievances. The Member of Lake Melville said that while he does not condone violence it's "up to the people of the province" whether Liberal MHAs should get a "shit knocking." From his point of view, "There's nothing there to talk about." Obviously, little has been learned. There should have been an unequivocal repudiation of such comments and actions by you and your members.

Several weeks ago, we listened as the Minister of Tourism, Culture, and Arts rose on a point of order and gave an impassioned speech of her experience with bullying. While there was no point of order, it was clear the Minister felt traumatised by comments in the House. As Premier, is it your belief that your members deserve respect, but that reactions

of other MHAs are to be dismissed as political theatre? If so, then we have a long way to go before we restore respect and decorum to our interactions in the House of Assembly.

MHA O'Leary, while new to the House of Assembly, is a veteran of municipal politics and served as Deputy Mayor of the largest city in the province. She has extensive experience as a community leader and social activist, but has never seen the behaviour she has witnessed since sitting in the House of Assembly. I rose on a point of privilege early on this session in relation to this behaviour. Since then, I have witnessed the growing acrimony and increasingly nasty chirping. I know too well the impact social media and online bullying has on our school communities. In our current political climate where we have politicians in other provinces and the US being targeted with hate and violence, our province cannot head down that path.

Our job as opposition is to oppose — to vigorously hold your government accountable to ensure the best for the people of this province. Opposition members have been doing nothing more than what you did when you were the Official Opposition. Yet, there seems to be a sensitivity to the questions as if we have no right to be so critical and skeptical of your decisions.

I reached out to you and Mr. Hogan in hopes that we as leaders could come together and have a chance to take some positive action together. I hope that you haven't shut the door on this opportunity.

Regardless, MHA O'Leary and I along with members on both sides of the House who have not engaged in this bad behaviour will continue to do our jobs and demand a level of decorum befitting the House of Assembly. We also remain hopeful that the leaders of the three parties can meet to discuss a path forward.

Take care,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "James Dinn". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

James Dinn, MHA  
St. John's Centre  
Leader, NL NDP

CC: John Hogan, Leader of the Official Opposition