

NDP Caucus News

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Trial Delays Are Hindering Justice for Victims of Sexual Assault and Intimate Partner Violence

MHA Sheilagh O’Leary (St. John’s East–Quidi Vidi) is urgently calling on government to resolve staff shortages in the justice system, which are causing trial delays and, in turn, are impacting survivors of sexual assault and intimate partner violence seeking justice.

A *CBC Investigates* story revealed that at least 2 dozen people have walked away from charges over an 18-month period due to trial delays – 3 of those being sexual assault cases. This is due to *R. v. Jordan*, a landmark decision which puts strict numerical limits on how long a trial can take. O’Leary says that governments lack of urgency with ensuring the courts have what they need, so trials are not delayed so long justice is left behind.

“It is very concerning to see that a number of cases have been overturned due to *R. v. Jordan*, especially pertaining to sexual assault and intimate partner violence cases where those seeking justice could be put back in harms way,” said O’Leary. “In many cases, survivors of sexual assault choose not to come forward due to the retrumatization that comes from the trial. Seeing others not get justice because the courts are delayed so long is only going to turn others away from seeking justice for what has been done to them. The lack of justice for all cases due to these delays is unacceptable, and a stain on our justice system.”

O’Leary brought up the issue with these [trial delays triggering a Jordan’s application](#) in the House of Assembly just last month, after an intimate partner violence trial was delayed due to the lack of translation resources. She reiterates that government must focus on ensuring the proper staffing and resources are in place so that justice does not get overturned, especially when it could result in more harm to the victim.

We have consistently heard from essential workers across our justice system about ongoing pressures – staffing shortages, limited access to resources, and mounting workloads that are straining the system. This is no longer a situation that can be managed at a routine pace. Government must act decisively, move with urgency, and make justice a true priority.

“If this government is for safer communities, this is where they must start.”

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