

NDP Caucus News

For Immediate Release

May 5, 2026

O’Leary Calls for Legislation on UNDRIP on Red Dress Day

Today is Red Dress Day, and in the House of Assembly MHA Sheilagh O’Leary (St. John’s East-Quidi Vidi) called for government to commit to legislation to adopt and implement the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP).

In 2007, United Nations adopted the comprehensive United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) which sets a global standard for the rights, dignity, and well-being of Indigenous peoples, including rights to self-determination, culture, identity, and lands. O’Leary says on a day like Red Dress Day, we are reminded how much work still has to be done.

“Speaker, on Red Dress Day we acknowledge the ongoing genocide of missing and murdered Indigenous women, girls, and gender diverse people and stand in solidarity with families, communities, and loved ones impacted by violence,” said O’Leary. “For far too long this crisis has been neglected, and it requires immediate, substantive action. Will the Minister bring in legislation to adopt and implement the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP)?”

O’Leary also called for a clear, proactive plan to confront the rise in racism and hate, particularly the harmful spread of anti-Indigenous rhetoric and residential school denial that continues to target and undermine Indigenous peoples and communities. The creation of a provincial action plan to combat hate was included in the NDP’s election platform, and O’Leary is calling on government to adopt this approach to better protect all minority groups across the province.

“Speaker, we have a shameful history of Indigenous discrimination rooted in colonialism, and with the evolving world of social media, this discrimination is only becoming more harmful and more targeted,” said O’Leary. “This behaviour is unacceptable, and unfair to our first peoples.”

“I ask the Minister, will your government commit to working with equity-seeking groups to develop a provincial plan to combat hate – including the creation of a dedicated Hate Crimes Investigation Unit.”

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