

NDP Caucus News

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O'Leary Calls for Action on Systemic Issues and Mental Health Supports in Policing

In the House of Assembly today, NDP MHA Sheilagh O'Leary raised concerns about what is described as systemic issues happening inside the Royal Newfoundland Constabulary (RNC) which were outlined by a former officer.

A former female officer who left the RNC in 2024 spoke about her experience in the force, saying “structural, transformative change” is needed to address issues within the organization. O'Leary questioned the Justice Minister in the House of Assembly, asking what concrete next steps will be taken to address the issues highlighted and ensure meaningful change within the RNC.

“Speaker, a former RNC officer has opened up about her experience, describing, and I quote, ‘a workplace rife with misogyny, organizational failures in training, governance, and leadership, which deprioritized mental health support for members.’ This is not the first time these systemic issues have been raised, they even led to a workplace review completed in 2022,” O'Leary said.

“I ask the Minister, what is your plan, aside from a much needed independent civilian-led oversight board, to combat these systemic issues?”

The former officer also told reporters that more needs to be done to support the mental health of officers and civilian workers, pointing to the difficult realities police personnel face every day on the job. O'Leary emphasized the importance of strengthening mental health supports to ensure the well-being of workers remains a top priority within the force.

“Speaker, we know that police work is hard on officers’ mental health. The 2022 RNC Workplace Review highlights the need for more mental health supports for officers, citing that the government EAP program worked, but they had a hard time due to the limits placed on the number of sessions provided,” said O'Leary. “The Newfoundland and Labrador Federation of Labour has consistently called for stronger mental health supports for first responders and all workers.”

“So, I ask the Minister, what will you do to ensure officers and civilian workers at the RNC can access mental health help when they need it?”

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