

NDP Caucus News

For Immediate Release

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Statement from MHA Sheilagh O’Leary on National Indigenous History Month

NL NDP MHA Sheilagh O’Leary (St. John’s East-Quidi Vidi) issued the following statement marking the start of National Indigenous History Month.

“National Indigenous History Month, celebrated each June, is a time to honour the rich histories, cultures, languages, and contributions of Indigenous communities. It is also a time to reflect on the lasting impacts of colonialism, recognize the strength and resilience of Indigenous peoples, and recommit ourselves to the ongoing work of truth, justice, and reconciliation.

“Indigenous peoples have lived on and cared for these lands since time immemorial. Their knowledge, stewardship, and cultures have shaped this province and country in profound ways. Here in Newfoundland and Labrador, Indigenous communities continue to enrich our province through their leadership, traditions, languages, and deep connection to the land and waters.

“However, the legacy of colonialism continues to create significant barriers for many Indigenous communities. Generations of displacement, discrimination, and underinvestment have contributed to inequities in housing, health care, education, infrastructure, and economic opportunity. Indigenous communities are also among those most affected by climate change, facing threats to traditional ways of life, food security, transportation, and cultural practices as environmental conditions continue to change.

“Governments must do more than offer words of recognition. They must work in true partnership with Indigenous peoples and provide the support and resources needed to address these inequities, uphold Indigenous rights, and ensure communities can thrive for generations to come. This includes strengthening education curriculum so students learn about Indigenous histories, cultures, contributions, and the lasting impacts of colonization, helping build greater understanding and respect for future generations.”

“The NL NDP continues to advocate for meaningful support for Indigenous communities, including our commitment to adopt and implement the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP). This would include:

- Increasing the number of Indigenous professionals working in health care, justice, and education; and
- Collaborating with Indigenous governments, communities, and organizations to support every child’s success and promote equal access to quality education for Indigenous and non-Indigenous students.

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“National Indigenous History Month is an opportunity for all Newfoundlanders and Labradorians to learn from Indigenous histories, cultures, and perspectives, while also reflecting on our shared responsibility to advance reconciliation through action. Building a more just and equitable future requires listening to Indigenous voices, supporting Indigenous-led solutions, and ensuring Indigenous communities have the resources they need to succeed.”

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