NDP Caucus News

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O'Leary Recognizes Restorative Justice Week by Calling for Action in House of Assembly

In recognition of Restorative Justice Week, NDP MHA Sheilagh O'Leary (St. John's East-Quidi Vidi) questioned government today on their commitment to not just recognize the role and benefits of restorative justice practices, but to act.

O'Leary says that now is the time for government to focus on how we can ensure safer communities, not solely through policing, but with the implementation of restorative justice practices that focus on education and rehabilitation based support for inmates to learn from their mistakes and give them the tools they need to be successful when reintegrating into society. She points to the government in Manitoba who are prioritizing this in their justice system.

"Speaker, this week is Restorative Justice Week, a time to recognize the important role restorative justice plays in building safer communities. The NDP government in Manitoba has recognized the value of this approach, recently breaking ground on a facility that will bring together rehabilitation, addictions treatment, job training, and therapeutic programming alongside traditional accountability measures," said O'Leary. "I ask the Minister of Justice; will this government follow Manitoba's lead and ensure that the replacement for HMP puts restorative justice and rehabilitation at the heart of its design and approach?"

Over the past year, O'Leary has met with community groups and restorative justice leaders across the province, discussing how to strengthen and expand restorative justice in Newfoundland and Labrador. Building on those conversations, O'Leary wrote to the Minister over the summer, calling for a roundtable that would bring these groups and members of the House together to build on the work already underway and identify ways to move restorative justice forward.

"Speaker, addressing the root causes of crime is not solely about policing – it's about prevention, education, and giving someone the support they need to thrive in their community," said O'Leary.

"This is well known by the many community groups across our province that work towards advancing restorative justice measures. The Minister would not commit to this working together approach when I wrote to her previously. I ask the Minister, again, will she collaborate on a round table discussion on restorative justice?"

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