NDP Caucus News

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O'Leary Calls for Basic Human Standards for Inmates, Restorative Justice Practices

In the House of Assembly today, NDP MHA Sheilagh O'Leary (St. John's East-Quidi Vidi) questioned the Minister of Justice on her government's commitment to improving the inhumane conditions at HMP and calling for a stronger push for restorative justice to give more supports to those able to reintegrate in our communities.

O'Leary highlighted the situation that occurred last week which saw no toothbrushes available for inmates at HMP. She says that while it's good that the situation was resolved, it shouldn't have happened in the first place, and waiting until the new building is built isn't good enough to address these reoccurring problems.

"Last week we heard the disturbing report that inmates at HMP did not have access to something as basic as toothbrushes. This is just the latest example of the unacceptable conditions people are living with inside this facility. When questioned by the media, the Minister suggested these issues would be addressed once the new building is completed. But that building is not expected to be ready until Fall 2029," said O'Leary.

"I ask the Minister, does she think it's acceptable to tell inmates to wait until 2029 for the basic standards of dignity and care they deserve?"

"People in custody are still people, and they deserve basic dignity and respect today, not three years from now. I wrote to the Minister in July calling for a round-table approach on restorative justice, bringing together community organizations, justice professionals, and government. This would be a valuable first step toward building a system that better serves everyone."

"I ask the Minister, will she bring together a round table on restorative justice focusing on rehabilitation and addressing the root causes of crime, so people are better equipped to successfully reintegrate into society?"

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