

Statement in the Legislature

by

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Minister Responsible for Women's Issues

Woman Abuse Prevention Month

November 3, 2009

CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY

Mr. Speaker.

I rise today to acknowledge November as Woman Abuse Prevention Month.

This is a month to reaffirm our collective responsibility to end violence against women.

I think, with great admiration, of the women I have met – women who have experienced domestic violence and yet have gone on to build a better life for themselves and their children.

Their stories are inspiring and compel us to do more and to do better in preventing woman abuse. Violence against women is unacceptable.

In addition to acknowledging the strength of survivors, I also want to take the time to appreciate the tireless efforts of professionals and organizations that help those women and their children rebuild their lives. They deserve our thanks.

Mr. Speaker, while much is being done to help abused women, we know that violence won't end without the continued and concerted efforts of government, communities and individuals.

Communities across Ontario are taking action to end violence against women. And this government has made significant progress in investing in the kinds of community programs that we know are so important to both protect and support women and their children.

And our government is taking action.

Last year, we invested \$18.8 million in additional annualized funding for women's shelters and second stage housing. This funding will give more Ontario women a place to go and obtain services they need to start over.

Our government has increased funding to community-based violence against women prevention services by 46 per cent since 2003.

In August of 2008, this government announced \$1.5 million for Ontario's 42 Domestic Violence Community Coordinating Committees, to improve coordination among the many agencies that serve victims of domestic violence.

Mr. Speaker, domestic violence is a serious crime.

Last month, part of Ontario's family law reform legislation that strengthens enforcement of restraining orders came into force. These reforms will offer more protection to women who are being abused.

Our government has also introduced changes to the Occupational Health and Safety Act which will help to address sexual harassment and domestic violence in the workplace.

With the House's continued support, we will make workplaces safer places for our sisters, daughters, friends and neighbours.

But, Mr. Speaker, we know there's more to do. That's why I am so personally committed to the Domestic Violence Action Plan and that's why we are working closely with our partners in the sector to move ahead with some of the Domestic Violence Advisory Council's recommendations.

Mr. Speaker, freedom from violence is a human rights issue.

Later this month, November 25th marks International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women. Communities around the world will renew their commitment to do more to end the violation of women and girls' rights to safety in their homes and their communities.

As well, on that day, The White Ribbon Campaign in Canada will join 54 other countries in launching its annual 10-day campaign to educate young men and boys about this important issue.

Mr. Speaker, it takes all of us to shut the door on violence. Working together, we can open the door to freedom and dignity for all women.

Thank you.