



## DEBATES AND PROCEEDINGS

Speaker: Honourable Kevin Murphy

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First Session

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 4, 2013

**MADAM SPEAKER** « » : The honourable member for Truro-Bible Hill-Millbrook- Salmon River.

**MS. LENORE ZANN** « » : Madam Speaker, on December 6, 1989, a young man acting with a lethal combination of misogyny and a gun killed 14 innocent women in Montreal. Here in Nova Scotia, in Canada, and around the world, women, girls, youth, and very young children are subjected daily to many forms of violence. Sexism, bullying, abuse, cyber violence, racism, and pornography are just some examples. There is also a demand for graphic images of sexualized torture of women and children, which are obtained from users of the Internet. In fact, an incident happened here in Nova Scotia just in 2011. I refer, of course, to Raymond Lahey, the 71-year-old former bishop of the Archdiocese of Antigonish who, when caught at the airport in Ottawa, had hundreds of sexualized images of children and torture on his laptop.



Given that Healthy Relationships is a program that promotes awareness about the difference between violent relationships and healthy relationships, I believe that it is important for the Province of Nova Scotia to support this important program which, at the present time, is offered by women's groups and centres around the province. In particular in Antigonish, the women's centre there provides that to 10 different high schools. They feel that, at this point in time, there is not enough money to deliver the program properly

right across the province. They say we need a trainer in each community to help train students so that they understand and fully integrate the education about what is abuse, what is cyberbullying, what is sexually accepted, and what is not accepted in society today. Kids today need to be taught by adults and oftentimes adults are abusing these as well.

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Our NDP Government established the sexual assault interdepartmental action plan to help deal with the serious problem of sexual assault in our province. Our government was the first to establish something like this, and a lot of good work was done by many people over the past couple of years. However, I'm told that the sexual assault action plan is now on hold. So I can't urge the current government enough to take a look at this and please keep it going, and put some money and support into the women's centres across the province so that they can help the women and girls in our communities and help to train students to understand all of these important topics.

The women's centres that I've spoken to all believe that we need core annual funding for their centres in order for them to operate properly. Again, I would ask for this current government to please listen to that plea.

The other thing I wanted to say is that freedom from femicide and other forms of gender-based violence in Nova Scotia, Canada, and around the world has yet to be achieved, because some acts of violence that women endure continue to remain invisible. I speak here of torture perpetrated by private individuals or groups. These are called "non-state actors." For example, there was one woman in my constituency of Bible Hill who recounted such torture, and she was marginalized for over 25 years. She tried to tell people, and nobody listened. I have a copy of her story for those who would like to read it.

Also, I have a pamphlet written by two of my constituents, Jean Sarson and Linda MacDonald, who have written about non-state torture and the importance of us learning about this and its importance. We need to change the Criminal Code of Canada, they say, because at this point non-state torture is not recognized, and therefore the people who are victimized by such actions are not protected.

They say at present the Criminal Code of Canada is discriminatory in that persons - very young children, youth, or adults - who suffered from non-state torture from parents, husbands, mothers, other strangers, who they don't know if they've been kidnapped - they cannot seek justice for the torture that they've survived. The Criminal Code of Canada does not permit them equality under the law, because Section 269.1 only permits individuals who have been tortured by officials - meaning police, military, or representatives of governments - to seek legal redress for torture victimization.

I believe that the time has come to promote among our political peers the need for a private member's bill to be introduced federally that would modernize the existing

provisions relating to torture in the Criminal Code of Canada, in efforts to eliminate legal discrimination and promote equal access to justice and redress. Without specifically identifying non-state torture as a crime in the Criminal Code of Canada, no criminal data identifying that such torture occurs can even be collected, thus disregarding the human dignity of persons who have suffered victimization.

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In closing, I would just like to say that in this day and age, the fact that women and children are still suffering from violence, when young women's bodies are found stuffed in gym bags floating down a river in Cape Breton, Nova Scotia, and when young women are found in walls, in crevices, in the trunks of cars, something is wrong with our society. Something is terribly wrong and we need to teach our children respect for one another, for their parents, for women, girls, and children so that we can live in a safe society that is full of compassion, kindness, and love for one another.

I also believe that seeing adults such as ourselves, if we start to bully each other in the House and the kids come in to watch that, does not set a good example. I hope that all of us can listen to that and pay attention as we proceed with our proceedings. Thank you.

[MADAM SPEAKER](#) « » : The time allotted for the Adjournment motion has expired. I wish to thank everyone.

The motion is carried.

[The House rose at 6:14 p.m.]

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