



OFFICIAL OPPOSITION DISSENTING REPORT

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

**STANDING COMMITTEE ON
JUSTICE POLICY'S STUDY ON
INTIMATE PARTNER VIOLENCE**

November 27, 2025

With Heartfelt Gratitude

To every survivor and witness who testified about intimate partner violence at the committee hearings: *thank you*. You placed your trust in this process, and we do not take that lightly. We recognize our obligation to turn your testimony into meaningful change.

Thank you to the family members who testified, shared their insights, called for action, and expressed their hopes for real, sustained change. Thank you especially to the grandparents, uncles and aunts who have become unexpected caregivers to young children as a result of femicide. Thank you to frontline workers, researchers, emergency responders, and legal and community advocates who brought urgency to our work. Thank you for refusing to let these harmful realities be ignored.

The truth is, we could not do this legislative work without you. You all gave this work direction, purpose, and heart. We did everything possible to represent your testimony accurately and faithfully.

We dedicate this dissenting report to victims of femicide. We are committed to addressing its predictable and preventable root causes so that it will never happen again. We dedicate this dissenting report to survivors of intimate partner violence trying to rebuild their lives under the austerity perpetuated by the provincial government. We dedicate this dissenting report to the survivors who are still in abusive situations. We hope that the measures proposed will create a social safety net that allows you to feel confident about leaving and never looking back.

Finally, we dedicate this to the children of the province of Ontario. We want you to have a future built on respectful, caring, and accountable relationships. We do this work for you.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'K. Wong-Tam', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Kristyn Wong-Tam
MPP Toronto Centre

On behalf of Dr. Jill Andrew, MPP Lisa Gretzky and MPP Peggy Sattler,
co-sponsors of Bill 173, Intimate Partner Violence Epidemic Act, 2024

On behalf of MPP Doly Begum, co-sponsor of Bill 55, Intimate Partner Violence
Epidemic Act, 2025

On behalf of MPP Catherine Fife, sponsor of Bill 189, Lydia's Law (Accountability
and Transparency in the Handling of Sexual Assault Cases), 2024

On behalf of Rev. Dr. Alexa Gilmour, Shadow Minister for Women's Social and
Economic Opportunity

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The following are the recommendations from the Official Opposition's Dissenting Report on the Standing Committee on Justice Policy's Study on Intimate Partner Violence. These recommendations are based directly on the testimonies of survivors, experts, frontline workers, and community organizations that appeared before the Committee.

It is essential to note that the recommendations are part of a broader body of work.

Numerous recommendations have been put forward in government reports, coroners' inquests, the Domestic Violence Death Review Committee's reports, community organization reports, and academic research studies. The Government of Ontario is urged to act not only on these recommendations, but also to review and implement the numerous existing recommendations that continue to be ignored.

The recommendations address intimate partner violence through a comprehensive, multi-sectoral approach that recognizes IPV as both a public health crisis and a systemic issue rooted in social inequality. They reflect a comprehensive understanding that intimate partner violence cannot be addressed through any single intervention, but requires coordinated action across prevention, response, and legal systems.

The dissenting report is organized across five key thematic areas:

- Addressing Violence Against Indigenous Women
- Prevention
- Response, Intervention, and Victim Supports
- Legal Responses
- Data, Accountability, and Oversight

Dissenting Report on the Standing Committee on Justice Policy's Study on Intimate Partner Violence:

RECOMMENDATIONS



**Addressing Violence
Against Indigenous
Women**



Prevention



**Response,
Intervention,
and Victim Supports**



Legal Responses



Addressing Violence Against Indigenous Women

1. **Implement the provincial calls to justice within the Reclaiming Power and Place:** The Final Report of the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls.
2. **Provide sustainable and core funding for Indigenous women's organizations** – investments should reflect the disproportionate rates of violence Indigenous women experience.
3. **Invest in culturally responsive shelter services**, both transitional and affordable housing, with specialized housing supports for Indigenous women fleeing violence.
4. **Legislate the Pathways to Safety Strategy** to ensure Indigenous women's safety remains a priority for future governments.
5. **Ensure any provincial and municipal declarations and responses to intimate partner violence explicitly recognize the disproportionate rates of violence against Indigenous women and girls**, their unique and intersectional experiences, and the root causes of this violence.
6. **Prioritize Indigenous women's safety at all levels of government** in all policies, plans, and strategies that impact, or have the potential to impact, the lives of Indigenous women.
7. **Involve Indigenous women in the development of all legislative, policy, program and service responses** to the issues that impact them, including gender-based violence.
8. **Provide increased and sustainable investments from all levels of government into new and existing community-based culturally grounded programs** and services that improve Indigenous women's safety and promote family and community healing.
9. **Provide additional and separate new investments for Indigenous men and boys** to support healing and restoration of balance in communities.
10. **Implement a community development approach to ending violence against Indigenous women that recognizes the distinctiveness of First Nations, Inuit, and Métis women**, and the different experiences and challenges faced by Indigenous women living in urban, rural, remote, and Northern communities.



Prevention

Prevention Education with Children, Youth, Caregivers and Community

11. **Invest in sustained public education campaigns** on gender-based violence.
12. **Equip community-based organizations with sufficient resources to provide information sessions to newcomers**, especially on IPV, to help newcomers understand the laws, their roles and responsibilities, and specifically the laws concerning IPV in Canada.
13. **Invest in school-based violence prevention programs** that are regionally responsive, culturally safe and demonstrate promising practices and/or evidence-based approaches.
14. **Invest in standardized risk/need assessment guides** to identify and address risk factors such as domestic violence, substance abuse, and poverty early on.
15. **Use a rights-based approach when interacting with young people**, informed by consent-awareness education.
16. **Invest in evidence-based parenting education** that can be tailored to parents' needs, learning styles, and preferences, ensuring these programs are accessible to all.
17. **Ensure cross-ministerial collaboration** for evidence-based parenting education promotion, dissemination, and outcome accountability, including the Ministries of Children, Community and Social Services, Education, Health, and the Attorney General.
18. **Invest in the public education system:** Dedicated teachers, educational assistants, child and youth workers, ECEs, custodial and trade workers – they make all the difference, helping students get the one-on-one attention they need and maintaining a nurturing learning environment.
19. **Significantly increase funding for school-based mental health workers, social workers, educational assistants, and child and youth workers** to address the critical gap that schools face needing more support staff as a result of provincial underfunding.
20. **Establish minimum staffing ratios for mental health professionals** in schools, ensuring every school has regular access to a psychologist, social worker, or mental health specialist.

21. **Prioritize funding for rural, remote, and northern schools**, which are significantly less likely than urban schools to have access to psychologists, social workers, and mental health specialists to address the high rates of intimate partner violence that youth in northern, rural and remote communities face.
22. **Invest in sustainable, ongoing funding for school mental health positions**, rather than project-based or short-term grants, to ensure workforce stability and continuity of care for students.
23. **Form formal collaboration partnerships between schools and community mental health organizations** to provide comprehensive support for students and families, thereby alleviating pressure on teachers.
24. **Allocate dedicated new provincial funding to school boards to hire and retain mental health professionals**, indexed to inflation and student population needs.
25. **Invest in training and professional development for school-based mental health staff** on trauma-informed, culturally responsive approaches to supporting students affected by intimate partner violence and family violence.

Professional Training

26. **Invest in data collection and provide mandatory training for judges**, crown attorneys, police, victim services personnel, veterinarians, and animal welfare investigators on the “violence link” and how to identify animal abuse.
27. **Provide mandatory training on trauma-informed and culturally responsive IPV services** for judges, crown attorneys, legal personnel, police and law enforcement, and victim services personnel.
28. **Invest in a multi-sector approach** to address IPV.
29. **Invest in trauma-informed, anti-oppressive, culturally-responsive IPV training**.
30. **Explore developing “a uniform standard” for risk assessment** that allows for the comprehensive understanding of how IPV manifests across various cultural contexts to be adopted by law enforcement and relevant services/agencies across the Province.

Recommendations for Link Between Animal Abuse and Intimate Partner Violence:

31. **Provide and require training for family law professionals, prosecutors, and the judiciary** on the link between animal abuse and IPV in family violence cases.
32. **Provide sustained and consistent core funding to shelters, enabling them to become pet-inclusive** and allowing more survivors to leave unsafe situations with their pets.
33. **Ensure animal abuse is included as a factor in domestic violence** and other offender risk assessments.
34. **Consider modifying crime-tracking systems to include animal abuse** in itemized or linked incident tracking, such as Major Case Management (MCM) and Violent Crime Linkage Analysis System (ViCLAS).
35. **Include standard questions about pets and other animals**, including how they are treated, in domestic violence calls and interviews by police and social service agencies.

Social Assistance

36. **Double Ontario Works and Ontario Disability Support Program** rates, indexed to the rate of inflation.
37. **Raise the minimum wage** and index it to the rate of inflation.



Response, Intervention, and Victim Supports

Survivor Supports

38. **Review and modify the funding formula for survivor support services**, including, but not limited to, shelters, sexual violence services, legal clinics, and court support worker programs, and increase the base budgets. Invest in annualized funding indexed to inflation rather than project-based funding models.
39. **Invest in core funding for victim services and provide per capita funding** for services, ensuring that organizations offering core victim services are funded 50% by the Ministry of the Attorney General.
40. **Investigate the needs and gaps in survivor supports that are currently 100% provincially funded**, to allocate funds to these organizations more effectively.
41. **Reinstate the 33% funding increase promised to sexual assault centres (SACs)** pledged in 2018.

Housing and Shelter Services

42. **Invest in housing options to reduce shelter bottlenecks**, including affordable rent-geared-to-income stock, adjustments to the Canada-Ontario Housing Benefit (COHB), purpose-built housing for families, supportive housing for survivors and their families, and capital and operational funding for the development of transitional housing.
43. **Dedicate funds to housing projects for women and families escaping abusive situations**; invest in a range of shelter, transitional, supportive, and affordable housing projects.
44. **Amend the Residential Tenancies Act, 2006 (RTA)** to improve rental affordability, including by implementing rent regulation and vacancy control and to allow for the removal of the abuser from the lease, enabling the survivor to remain in their home.
45. **Implement comprehensive rent control to prevent “renoviction,” “demoviction,”** and increase protection from predatory and negligent landlords, ensuring that rental units are properly maintained.

Child Care

46. **Invest in a robust, accessible, formal childcare system** with ample spaces across Ontario (including rural areas), so that parents who need to relocate can access childcare in their new location quickly and seamlessly.
47. **Make significant investments in workforce training and retention**, as well as capital infrastructure to support this growth.
48. **Invest in childcare offerings that are flexible** and suit the needs of shift workers, rural residents, and Indigenous communities.
49. **Invest in trauma-informed childcare for children** interacting with the court system.

Food Security

50. **Invest in programs that provide tangible supports for survivors**, including food.
51. **Properly fund shelters** so that they can provide clients with adequate and nutritious food.
52. **Support and invest in provincial wide school nutrition programs.**

Mental Health Services

53. **Explore expanding existing collaboration with School Mental Health Ontario** to develop and offer resources and training for school-based mental health professionals to support IPV prevention and intervention.
54. **Increase investment in community-based agencies**, including but not limited to community mental health centres and specialized shelters, to help deliver affordable mental health services, trauma-informed therapy, and peer support groups tailored to survivors' needs.
55. **Expand the registered nurse (RN) scope of practice** to include making referrals to specialist care, such as gynecology, psychiatry, or other specialty mental health services.
56. **Ensure that mental health services are OHIP-funded.**
57. **Ensure survivor support and victim services remain free to access** and remove barriers to mental health resources.

Francophone Survivor Support Services

58. **Invest in expanding French-language violence against women services**, including exploring the creation of new shelters and intimate partner violence programs in underserved regions such as Southern and Northwestern Ontario.
59. **Index operating budgets for French-speaking organizations** annually to account for inflation, ensuring they can maintain service levels amid rising costs.
60. **Fund the development of French-language psychotherapy** programs for survivors of violence and the workers who support them.
61. **Create new staff positions in existing French-speaking organizations** to address rising demand for counselling, transitional and housing support, Family Court support, and services for children exposed to violence.
62. **Fund second-stage transitional housing for French-speaking survivors** to relieve pressure on shelters and provide tailored support for women achieving independence.

Culturally Responsive Services

63. **Support equity-seeking organizations and ensure coordination within the sector**, taking into account the relevant cultural context at every stage of project development.
64. **Build capacity within equity-deserving communities regarding understanding of IPV**, as well as potential supports accessible within their communities, including faith-based resources.

Child Welfare and Child Safety

65. **Address the chronic underfunding of children's aid societies** to resolve budget deficits, understaffing, and the placement of youth in unlicensed settings, which undermines the sector's capacity to implement reforms related to IPV.
66. **Conduct a comprehensive review of system-wide understaffing and underresourcing within child welfare** to ensure the efficacy of government initiatives to protect children and families from IPV.
67. **Establish a centralized, multi-ministry working group to coordinate IPV response** across social services, health, justice, education, housing, and labour, with explicit focus on child safety outcomes.
68. **Implement comprehensive data collection** regarding child protection involvement in cases of IPV to enable evidence-based policy development and progress monitoring.

69. **Mandate family violence programs in all social work**, social service worker, and child and youth worker programs to ensure discussion on the impact of IPV on children and youth, addressing the current gap in professional training.
70. **Review, invest and modernize the Partner Assault Response (PAR) Program** to a more current model that includes a focus on the impact on children and youth who are exposed to gender-based violence, and expand eligibility beyond low-risk offenders.
71. **Invest in promising practices and evidence-based perpetrator intervention** programs that focus on child safety.
72. **Ensure that the Domestic Violence Death Review Committee's recommendations are implemented** through sectoral or cross-sectoral tables to review and develop coordinated strategies, rather than leaving implementation to individual sectors without accountability.
73. **Provide doctors, nurses, and other health professionals with information on intimate partner violence**, including screening tools, to improve early identification of families at risk.
74. **Increase investment in services for youth in care who have been exposed to intimate partner violence**, addressing challenges in education, mental health, and housing stability that contribute to poor outcomes.



Legal Responses

Legal Aid

- 75. **Restore previous budget cuts and increase funding to Legal Aid Ontario** to ensure greater access to survivors.
- 76. **Amend the Legal Aid Ontario frameworks to enhance the eligibility** threshold and introduce mandatory cultural competency training for all family law practitioners.
- 77. **Invest in sustained legal aid reform**, rather than temporary amendments.
- 78. **Enhance access to services** tailored to language, transportation, and disability needs.

The Use of Parental Alienation Claims by Abusers in Family Court

- 79. **Provide ongoing training and education for Ontario judges, Crowns and other family justice professionals on “parental alienation”** and associated concepts, specifically as they relate to domestic violence.
- 80. **Ensure that family law practitioners have affordable or free access to experts** who can give evidence regarding the discreditation of “parental alienation syndrome.”
- 81. **Invest in Legal Aid Ontario and community programs**, such as the Family Court Support Worker program, to ensure support at all stages of the protection order legal process.

Court Delays

- 82. **Monitor all criminal cases pending disposition** for more than eight months and analyze the reasons for delays; capture the reasons for cases being delayed and stayed by judges (Auditor General recommendation).
- 83. **Commit to making the necessary investments to end Ontario’s chronically backlogged courts.** These efforts should include a legal workforce recruitment and retention strategy.
- 84. **Develop restorative and alternative justice models**, including Indigenous restorative justice frameworks, to expand access to justice and healing on the survivor’s own terms.
- 85. **Permanently expand legal aid eligibility** to reduce the number of survivors forced to navigate family law proceedings without representation.

Bail Reform

86. **Expand Ontario's bail compliance dashboard** to include domestic violence and sexual assault offenders, as well as individuals with peace bond conditions related to domestic incidents.
87. **Establish an independent, centralized body to oversee bail**, with a specific focus on designing and implementing safety plans for individuals on bail who have been charged with IPV-related offences.
88. **Improve funding and support for supervised bail programs** under the Bail Verification and Supervision Program.
89. **Develop trauma-informed approaches to bail conditions** that recognize the complex dynamics of IPV relationships and centre survivor choice and safety planning.
90. **Study the feasibility of, and implement if feasible**, justice sector participants having access to relevant findings made in family and civil law proceedings for use in criminal proceedings, including at bail and sentencing stages (CKW Inquest).
91. **Ensure that survivor-informed risk assessments** are incorporated into the decisions and positions taken by Crowns relating to bail, pleas, sentencing, and eligibility for Early Intervention Programs (CKW Inquest).
92. **Review and amend, where appropriate, standard language templates** for bail and probation conditions in IPV cases (CKW Inquest).
93. **Explore the concept of real-time geo-tracking systems** to monitor offenders out on bail (CKW Inquest).
94. **Standardize risk assessment across jurisdictions** to allow for consistent monitoring, community safety, increased transparency, and higher quality data (CKW Inquest).
95. **Strengthen provincial bail systems with increased compliance monitoring** and clear consequences to deter offenders from breaching conditions (CKW Inquest).

Restorative and Alternative Justice

96. **Lift the moratorium currently preventing survivors of sexual assault from accessing restorative justice services.**
97. **Support and invest in culturally safe restorative justice models** that meet the unique needs of their communities.
98. **Sustainably invest in alternative and restorative justice programs** in Ontario, including but not limited to the Community Justice Initiatives Revive Program.

Partner Abuse Response Program

- 99. **Increase sustainable, regionally responsive PAR funding.**
- 100. **Extend the length of PAR** and shrink group sizes.
- 101. **Integrate a self-referral model into PAR** as a preventive measure, rather than a reactive one.
- 102. **Invest in establishing more individualized and regionally responsive programming** as opposed to a “one size fits all” model.

Gun Control

- 103. **Implement the recommendations of the Nova Scotia Mass Casualty Commission**, especially C.21 (reducing gun lethality) and C.22 (revocation of firearms licenses for conviction of gender-based, intimate partner, or family violence).
- 104. **Create a comprehensive plan to limit perpetrators’ access to guns**, especially when previous threats with a weapon have been recorded.
- 105. **Increase the use of court-ordered language**, ensuring that alleged and convicted offenders will not reside in homes that have firearms.
- 106. **Create and fund a comprehensive early intervention program for youth** involved in guns, gangs, and street violence.

Protection Orders

- 107. **Ensure that people at risk of IPV have 24/7 access to accessible reporting tools** that will notify Chief Firearms Officers.
- 108. **Explore enhanced licence revocation in reports of IPV**, stalking, and related threats.
- 109. **Ensure the immediate enforcement of orders to remove access to firearms** following the issuance of removal orders.
- 110. **Explore the breaking down of silos surrounding protection order data**, enabling law enforcement and service providers to share data, potentially including real-time location information, to enhance safety.
- 111. **Work with the Law Commission of Ontario to understand the feasibility of and implement, where possible, their recommendations to improve protection orders**, including: availability of emergency protection orders; increased access to legal aid; education for protection-order decision makers about IPV risks; plain language drafting of protection orders; creation of a protection order database; and ease of registration and enforcement of protection orders issued outside of Ontario.

112. **Investigate the expansion of protection order applications** to serve more people at risk, including those who have experienced teen dating violence and to cover technology-facilitated abuse.

Family Court

113. **Increase funding for and availability of family court support workers.**
114. **Increase training for family court judges and lawyers** on IPV competence.
115. **Implement the training mandates outlined in Keira's Law**, which has already been passed by the Ontario legislature.
116. **Hold the Ministry of the Solicitor General and the broader Ontario government accountable** for implementing and monitoring the recommendations outlined in all previous DVDRC reports.
117. **Ensure that family law decision makers receive training** to understand how IPV affects children.

Data, Accountability and Oversight

118. **Establish a robust internal government accountability mechanism** to ensure the implementation and monitoring of IPV-related policies and recommendations across all ministries.
119. **Appoint an independent Gender-Based Violence Commissioner** to provide oversight, public reporting, and accountability for the government's response to intimate partner violence and gender-based violence.
120. **Establish an advisory body to the GBV Commissioner that includes both internal government representatives and community organizations**, ensuring survivor voices and frontline expertise inform policy development and implementation.
121. **Commit to appointing an independent investigator when creating committee reports** on gender-based violence.

Closing Summary

These recommendations are part of a myriad of recommendations that have been made to address intimate partner violence and gender-based violence. Government reports, coroner's inquests such as the CKW Inquest, the Domestic Violence Death Review Committee, community organization reports, and academic research studies have all contributed extensive recommendations over many years. **The knowledge and solutions exist. What is needed now is the political will and sustained investment to implement them.**

Intimate partner violence is predictable and preventable. The patterns are well understood, the risk factors are well-documented, and effective interventions have been identified. Every femicide represents a failure of systems that had opportunities to intervene. We must act now.

The recommendations consistently emphasize several cross-cutting themes:

- **Sustained and stable funding:** Project-based and short-term funding undermines service delivery and workforce stability. Annualized funding indexed to inflation is essential for effective IPV response.
- **Community and Survivor-centred approaches:** Survivors must be at the centre of policy design and service delivery. Their autonomy, safety, and healing must guide all interventions.
- **Recognition of intersectionality¹¹:** Communities that are historically and currently marginalized, including but not limited to Indigenous, Black, Racialized, Francophone, newcomer, 2SLGBTQIA+, and people living with disabilities, are targeted for and subjected to IPV at higher rates than the general public and require specific, sustainably funded and culturally responsive, accessible services.
- **Protecting and strengthening the social safety net:** Housing, childcare, food security, mental health services, and adequate social assistance are not peripheral to IPV prevention – they are foundational to enabling survivors to leave and rebuild their lives.
- **Trauma-informed training:** All professionals who interact with survivors – from police to judges to healthcare workers – require comprehensive, ongoing training in trauma-informed, culturally responsive practice.
- **Alternative pathways to justice:** The criminal justice system alone cannot address IPV. Restorative justice and community-based alternatives must be available to survivors who seek them.

1 Crenshaw, Kimberlé. "Demarginalizing the Intersection of Race and Sex: A Black Feminist Critique of Antidiscrimination Doctrine, Feminist Theory and Antiracist Politics." *University of Chicago Legal Forum*, vol. 1989, no. 1, 1989, pp. 139-167.

- **Accountability and oversight:** Independent oversight through a GBV Commissioner and robust internal accountability mechanisms are essential to ensure that recommendations are implemented and progress is measured.

The Official Opposition urges the Government of Ontario to act on these recommendations with the urgency of the epidemic, with the urgency that intimate partner violence demands. Declaring intimate partner violence an epidemic would signal that commitment and catalyze the coordinated, resourced response that everyone in our province deserves.



WHY A DISSENTING REPORT?

This dissenting report, or minority report, was written and submitted on behalf of the Official Opposition Ontario NDP MPPs and represents our response to the Government Report submitted to the Standing Committee on Justice Policy's Study on Intimate Partner Violence (hereafter referred to as the Committee Study).

Through this dissenting report, as minority Standing Committee on Justice Policy ("Committee") members, we exercise our rights to disagree in whole and in part with the process, findings, conclusions, or recommendations of the majority in the government-dominated legislative Committee.

A dissent is necessary when the committee process and report writing are heavily controlled by the government, and the deficiencies include:

- Mission drift from the approved mandate to study intimate partner violence (IPV) exclusively
- Consultation was significantly reduced from previously made commitments
- Consultation was restricted as the Committee was not permitted to leave Toronto
- Travel resources to Indigenous, northern, rural, and Francophone communities were removed
- Affected communities were silenced through the exclusion of witnesses
- The debate was reduced and restricted
- Minority member privileges were revoked

We believe the Government Report does not adequately capture all evidence, perspectives, legislative assessments or policy risks raised during the study. A dissenting report is required to ensure the legislative record remains accurate, balanced, and transparent. In this report, we strive to correct the interpretation of the record, prevent mischaracterization of the findings, and preserve expert and survivor testimonies.

Legislative oversight is required, as the Government has disrupted the longstanding parliamentary process of having non-partisan, professional public service staff record, prepare, analyze, test, research, and write the final report for submission to the Committee for consideration and line-by-line review. Instead, the government tabled a partisan report, written by a Government Member in the name of the multi-partisan Committee.

Critical motions to amend and strengthen reports are necessary and routinely adopted at every standing committee of the Ontario Legislative Assembly. If a non-partisan, conventional report-writing process had been permitted during the IPV study, the

Committee, with both majority and minority members, would have collectively strengthened the report, corrected inaccuracies, filled in omissions, and prevented harm to affected communities. In the absence of these necessary interventions, this dissenting report was written to maintain the procedural record.

This dissenting report serves as a long-term reference for future committees, a record of legislative reform efforts, policy reviews, court challenges, or public inquiries. A dissent ensures important warnings and alternative approaches are not lost.

Without this dissenting report, the Government Report may be taken as unanimous, providing an inaccurate basis for policy or legislative change. **The writing process for the Government Report contains dangerous precedents that the Official Opposition believes should not be normalized in Ontario's legislature.** This risks undermining public trust, misinforming decision-makers, and marginalizing impacted communities whose experiences or evidence were not fully reflected.

Transparency and accountability are important to the dissenting members, and we exercise our right to distinguish ourselves from select recommendations in the Government Report. **Furthermore, this dissenting report serves as a record that debate was restricted and that no consensus was achieved in the government-controlled process for report writing.**

INTIMATE PARTNER VIOLENCE IS AN EPIDEMIC IN ONTARIO

The Government-tabled report suggests that part of the Committee's work included a responsibility to determine whether Intimate Partner Violence is endemic or an epidemic. This is not true. The record will show Bill 173, Intimate Partner Epidemic Act, 2024, was referred to the Committee but never called for debate. **The Committee was never tasked with making a recommendation regarding any declaration.** The idea of declaring IPV endemic in Ontario was not meaningfully discussed during the Committee study period.

This dissenting report recommends that the Government of Ontario declare intimate partner violence an epidemic in Ontario while acknowledging its endemic and systemic origins. This dual framing supports both urgent action and sustained policy transformation, ensuring that Ontario responds proportionately to the scale, severity, and structural roots of violence.

Translating social behaviour into the language of epidemiology is challenging at the best of times. Intimate partner violence in Ontario has qualities that characterize endemics: IPV is persistent and systemically entrenched in social life. IPV also has qualities that characterize epidemics: IPV often kills unpredictably and can escalate with crisis-level frequency. That is why 106 municipalities and many public health organizations have already recognized IPV as an epidemic. The Ontario Legislature must prioritize action and outcomes for survivors and people at risk: those outcomes are most assured when IPV is recognized as an epidemic.

This nuance is more than semantic. Experts repeatedly told the Committee that recognizing IPV as an epidemic will directly support an emergency-level government response, inter-ministerial coordination, resource allocation, centralized data monitoring and collection, transparency, accountability, and public safety.

Naming intimate partner violence as endemic recognizes its ongoing, systemic, and structural embeddedness in Ontarians' social lives, but it does not compel urgent action. Knowledge that IPV is ongoing has not prompted the government to deploy emergency response solutions. **Governments act to fight epidemics, but they learn to live with endemics.** The case for action to address the social determinants of safety includes IPV. Still, it is not realistic to believe that declaring IPV an endemic will transform underlying gender inequality, poverty, housing precarity, disability discrimination and racism. These barriers are systematically embedded in institutions and need to be addressed through multiple lenses, not just IPV.

When the CKW Inquest set out in its first recommendation that the Government of Ontario declare intimate partner violence an epidemic, they did so knowing that it would elevate government response and accountability for what is ultimately a public health and safety crisis. **The declaration of an epidemic creates public expectation for swift, coordinated intervention and a whole-of-government response.**

Survivors and experts told the Committee, on every day of hearings, that framing IPV as an epidemic would help mobilize immediate investments in crisis support services, emergency shelter capacity, risk assessment teams, and enhanced policing and judicial responses. Describing IPV as endemic is unlikely to secure the same outcomes for survivors and their children.

Yet the strongest argument for declaring IPV an epidemic is more straightforward: it is what survivors and policy experts called for this Committee to do. The Committee's study on IPV did not hear calls to declare IPV an endemic. Survivors and advocates called on the Committee to recognize IPV as an epidemic because it would validate the crisis communities are facing and recognize how difficult it has been to marshal the political will to act. Concluding that this Committee heard that IPV is endemic would amount to gaslighting survivors and experts. **The Ontario Government should choose to believe survivors.**

Government Motion to Declare IPV Endemic in Ontario

On the morning of November 5, 2025, Charmaine Williams, Associate Minister of Women's Social and Economic Opportunity, moved a motion in the legislature “seeking unanimous consent that, in the opinion of the House, the government of Ontario recognizes the **endemic** nature of intimate partner violence in Ontario and its significant and continuing impact on individuals, families, and communities.”

The Official Opposition agreed to support the Associate Minister's motion. It was unanimously adopted. As the Government was informed, immediately afterwards, Lisa Gretzky, MPP for Windsor West and Official Opposition Shadow Minister for the Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services, moved a motion seeking “unanimous consent of the House that the government of Ontario recognize and declare intimate partner violence an epidemic.” This would be the fifth time the Official Opposition moved such a motion. Government MPPs called out, “No,” and the unanimous consent motion failed.

On November 24, 2025, the Associate Minister explained to Global News that “intimate partner violence is deep-rooted. It's not something that just pops up requiring short-term solutions to address it, because you can't make intimate partner violence go away.” She justified her refusal to declare IPV an epidemic because it would be “disingenuous” and suggested doing so would oversimplify a complicated, long-term and unsolvable problem.

The Official Opposition strongly disagrees with the Associate Minister and her government. We know that intimate partner violence is endemic in its persistent and systemic dimensions, and an epidemic as violence against women and girls is not inevitable. Ontario can end intimate partner violence. Declaring it an epidemic would compel the government to take emergency response and swift action, bringing critical funding, system-wide reform, rapid inter-ministerial coordination, and a crisis-level government response. The declaration that IPV is endemic has triggered no such response. Just as we believe survivors, we believe that IPV must and will end when the root causes are understood and addressed.