

Statement to the Legislature

By The Honourable Laurel Broten

Minister Responsible for Women's Issues

WOMAN ABUSE PREVENTION MONTH

Queen's Park

November 24, 2011

Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize November as Woman Abuse Prevention Month in Ontario.

Today we acknowledge the need to continue to work together to prevent violence against women.

And we recognize that it is everyone's responsibility to end woman abuse.

Woman abuse is insidious – much of it goes unreported.

And it can take many forms: physical abuse, sexual abuse, emotional abuse.

In spite of under reporting - last year, the coroner investigated 22 confirmed cases where women lost their lives to domestic violence.

Mr Speaker - this is absolutely unacceptable.

Woman Abuse does not discriminate. There is no typical victim.

It crosses every social boundary: society, class, race, ethnicity, age, ability and sexual orientation.

We know that every woman deserves to live her life free of fear and the threat of violence.

And every child deserves to grow up in a safe, loving home – free of fear of violence.

That's why we have invested more than \$208 million every year in programs to protect women from violence and to provide support for victims.

Some of this money has gone towards training over 28,000 front line workers in communities across Ontario to recognize the signs of domestic violence and support victims.

We've also worked with our partners in the community on our Domestic Violence and Sexual Violence Action Plans.

These are comprehensive plans that take practical steps to provide supports and resources to tackle these complex issues.

And more than 200 communities have participated in our ground breaking Neighbours, Friends and Families public education campaign since 2004.

We've expanded this program into Francophone Aboriginal and newcomer communities to provide culturally and linguistically sensitive training.

November 25 marks the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women.

Tomorrow also begins the White Ribbon Campaign, the world's largest public education initiative - to bring men and women to end violence against women.

I am proud to say the white ribbon campaign started right here in Ontario and is now in over 60 countries world-wide.

I want to thank all of my colleagues in the chamber today for donning the white ribbon as a sign of their commitment to ending domestic violence.

Mr. Speaker, our government is working to build strong, healthy communities.

To stop domestic violence, we need to end the silence that allows the cycle of abuse to begin – and to continue.

I want to thank everyone who works on the front lines and provides support and services across the province to survivors of violence.

The work you do every day makes a real and concrete difference in the lives of women and their children.

Women everywhere deserve to live lives free from violence and abuse. Children deserve loving homes free from violence and turmoil. And communities deserve to live in peace.

Women and men all across Ontario are united in saying let's end domestic violence now.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.