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November 9, 2018

Dear Members of the Standing Committee on the Status of Women,

Thank you for inviting me to speak to the committee on November 7th, 2018. In addition to my testimony I would like to add the following for your consideration.

I understand that the Committee is conducting a study on the network of shelters and transition houses serving women and children affected by violence against women and intimate partner violence and that it will examine:

- the current gap between the need for and available beds in shelters and transition houses;
- current federal programs and funding in support of shelters and transition houses; and
- possible solutions to address the gap between need and supply.

I am writing from Halton Women's Place. We are a 52-bed shelter located in two locations, one in Milton and one in Burlington Ontario. We primarily serve women and their children fleeing violence. Last year, we served 770 women through our residential and community outreach programs and had to turn away 400 women due to lack of space or because we could not meet their needs.

The work we do is imperative; the lives of women and children are literally at stake. We provide more than just safe shelter from abuse. In addition to ensuring the safety of women and children, we also offer programming such as counselling, financial planning, court services, children's programming and transitional support.

As you know, in Canada, a woman is killed by her partner or former partner every 6 days. In the first 8 months of this year 106 women were killed by an intimate partner.

Along with our sister shelters, I am writing with the following recommendations:

- Given that violence against women is at an epidemic level, shelters and transition houses serving women and children affected by violence against women must be recognized as an essential service.



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- Shelters and transition houses are currently grossly under-funded. We recommend a significant increase in core and sustainable funding. This funding should increase the number of beds and shelters available but must also cover staffing and service provision. Building a shelter without providing for its staffing is not helpful.
- We support Women's Shelters Canada's call for a National Action Plan. The Government of Canada should develop a National Action Plan in line with the United Nations recommendations. This National Action Plan, like the National Housing Strategy, should cover the Federal government as well as provincial/territorial governments. In Canada in 2018, every woman should have access to comparable services no matter where she lives.

We invite a member of the Committee to visit our shelter when you are in our area and/or to connect with us by phone should you have any questions or clarifications about the work we do. I can be reached at 905-332-1200 X 241

Sincerely,



Diane Beaulieu
Executive Director
Halton Women's Place