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LA PASSE-R-ELLE

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November 8, 2018

Standing Committee on the Status of Women
House of Commons
Ottawa

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

We understand that the Committee is conducting a *Study on the System of Shelters and Transition Houses Serving Women and Children Affected by Violence Against Women and Intimate Partner Violence* and that the Committee will focus on:

- the current gap between the number of beds required and the number of beds offered in shelters and transition houses;
- existing federal programs and funding for shelters and transition houses;
and
- possible solutions to fill the gap between supply and demand.

I am writing you on behalf of La Passe-R-Elle in the Hautes-Laurentides region. We are a 12-bed shelter located in Mont-Laurier, in the Hautes-Laurentides region. We serve primarily women experiencing partner violence and their children. Last year, we accommodated 46 women and 50 children and had to refuse 20 women and 16 children because of a lack of space.

In our view, safe houses do not receive equitable funding from one province or territory to another. The work that we do is essential; the lives of women and children are literally at stake. We offer more than a simple shelter from violence, a very important aspect in itself. As you know, one woman is killed by her partner or former partner every six days in Canada. In addition to ensuring the safety of women and children, we also offer various outreach services throughout the R.C.M. of Antoine-Labelle.

We would like to make the following recommendations:

- Since violence against women persists at an epidemic level, shelters and transition houses for abused women and their children must be recognized as an essential service.
- Shelters and transition houses are currently seriously underfunded. We recommend a significant, sustainable increase in core funding. This funding should increase the number of available beds and safe houses as well as cover staffing and services. Building a safe house without the necessary staff is futile.
- We support the appeal of Women's Shelters Canada in favour of a national action plan; the Government of Canada should develop a national action plan aligned with the United Nations'

recommendations. This national action plan, like the National Housing Strategy, should involve the federal government as well as the provincial and territorial governments. In 2018, every woman should have access to comparable services wherever she lives in Canada.

We invite the Committee members to visit our safe house if you are passing through our area and/or contact us by telephone if you have any questions or would like further information on the work that we do.

Sincerely,

[original signed]

Roxane Prenovost

Coordinator

La Passe-R-Elle des Hautes-Laurentides

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