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COMMUNITY ACTION WORKS: *Bill 173: Intimate Partner Violence Epidemic Act* passes second reading

TORONTO, April 11, 2024-Yesterday, the Government of Ontario carried Bill 173: Intimate Partner Violence Epidemic Act through a second reading and deferred it to the Justice Policy Committee. This means that the provincial government has recognized what we have long known and been calling for them to name: Intimate partner violence (IPV) is an epidemic.

While the government has indicated their intent to have the Justice Committee tour the province and research the impacts of intimate partner violence, our hope is that they will simultaneously begin implementing existing recommendations to address this violence, including passing Bill 173 through third reading and royal assent.

Survivors, families impacted by IPV, advocates, and service providers have called for the implementation of these recommendations since the 2022 release of the Culleton, Kuzyk and Warmerdam Inquest Report – that which presented the recommendation to declare IPV an epidemic. We hope the Justice Committee recognizes the urgency of this violence, and treats it as such, centring survivors, IPV experts, and advocates in their work, every step of the way.

As a service provider, we see every day the impacts of intimate partner and gender-based violence, and we know that supporting those fleeing violence means going beyond providing immediate shelter, but also wraparound trauma-informed, culturally appropriate supports, such as mental health services, housing acquisition support, and referrals to lawyers, doctors, and child care. We know that in order to end this violence we must address the root causes of it. We also know, that you cannot change what you refuse to name.

We are pleased to see the government shift its position on declaring IPV an epidemic, in no small part due to advocacy of survivors and the gender-based violence sector. While yesterday posed a critical step forward, we are keeping a close eye on the bill's progress and recognize it needs to happen in tandem with a series of supports to address this epidemic of violence meaningfully. Our work is far from over, but today we emerge with a renewed sense of hope and determination to see a world free from gender-based violence, in all its forms.

MEDIA

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