



Jennie Stevens

MPP for St. Catharines

Stevens urges MPPs to pass the Intimate Partner Violence Disclosure Act

QUEEN'S PARK – NDP MPP Jennie Stevens (St. Catharines) is urging MPPs to pass her private member's bill, Intimate Partner Violence Disclosure Act

"Intimate partner violence is a horrific, dangerous reality for too many people, and the isolation and stress of COVID-19 has made it so much worse. We can do more to empower women to protect themselves from intimate partner violence," said Stevens.

The [Intimate Partner Violence Disclosure Act](#) (Bill 274) helps people apply for information regarding whether their intimate partner has a history of committing domestic violence, and lets police warn people whether they apply or not. Stevens' private member's bill is based on Clare's Law – which has prevented countless dangerous situations in other provinces, including Saskatchewan and Alberta. The second reading of the Intimate Partner Violence Disclosure Act takes place Tuesday at the Ontario legislature.

Data from 17 police forces across the country show that calls related to domestic disturbances rose by nearly 12 per cent between March and June 2020 compared to the same four months in 2019, according to Statistics Canada. Canada's Assaulted Women's Helpline filed over 50 per cent more incoming calls between April 1 and Sept. 30 2020, compared to the same period of time in 2019.

"There is so much more we can do to protect women from intimate partner violence — this bill from the NDP is one more way to protect women, and empower them to protect themselves. The pandemic has further isolated women from their social networks and access to community organizations, which makes providing tools to women even more valuable. This bill makes it harder for violent abusers to hide their crimes from their next partner," said Stevens.

"This bill that protects women, individuals and families from intimate partner violence should be a non-partisan issue and I calling on MPPs of all parties to support this critical legislation."

Stevens was joined at a press conference Tuesday by Marlene Ham, Executive Director of the Ontario Association of Interval and Transition Houses (OAITH), Pamela Cross, Legal Director, Luke's Place Support & Resource Centre for Women & Children, Deb Singh, Counsellor at the Toronto Rape Crisis Centre Multicultural Women Against Rape and the Chair of the Ontario Coalition of Rape Crisis Centres, and Kimberley Greenwood, Police Chief for Barrie Police Services and Executive Member of the Ontario Association of Chiefs of Police (OACP).

[Video of Tuesday's press conference](#)

Quotes

Kimberley Greenwood, Police Chief for Barrie Police Services and Executive Member of the Ontario Association of Chiefs of Police (OACP)

"The adoption of the Intimate Partner Violence Disclosure Act could interrupt violent assaults before they occur offering a layer of protection never before experienced and endorses three key elements: the right to ask, the right to know and the right to privacy. This law will allow people to make informed choices about potentially harmful relationships and will be an important tool in protecting our communities from Intimate Partner and Gender-Based Violence."

Marlene Ham, Executive Director of the Ontario Association of Interval and Transition Houses (OAITH)

"While legislation like the one proposed can help some, we also know that many survivors are not engaged with legislated systems. What's been proposed is the start of a conversation, and it will require the experience of many perspectives, including the voices of survivors as it moves through the legislative process"

Pamela Cross, Legal Director, Luke's Place Support & Resource Centre for Women & Children

"NDP MPP Jennifer Stevens' Private Members Bill, Intimate Partner Violence Disclosure Act, 2021, offers an important start to protecting women from abuse. This bill creates an avenue for a woman to find out whether her partner has a history of violence, which has the potential to empower her to leave the relationship and even to save her life. With the adequate, sustained funding for community-based supports that the Bill calls for, women will be able to access the services they need as they make difficult decisions about their safety."

Deb Singh, Counsellor at the Toronto Rape Crisis Centre Multicultural Women Against Rape and the Chair of the Ontario Coalition of Rape Crisis Centres

"We hope with the implementation of this legislation, in consultation with community based organizations and survivors themselves in Ontario, that survivors can have a tool to find out information that may help inform their choices in protection against sexual violence. However we remain aware that this information doesn't stop gender based violence and there is always more to be done to support survivors of sexualized and intimate partner violence."