

Remarks – Honourable Darrell Dexter

Sexual Assault Awareness Month

May 3, 2013

Hello, my name is Darrell Dexter. I am pleased to be with you all this morning to mark this important month.

For too long issues of sexual violence and bullying have been swept under the rug or dealt with tentatively in society. Recent events have made it clear the status quo is not an option. We can and must do more.

As you may know, I had the chance to spend some time with Rehtaeh Parsons' family when we went to Ottawa. I can't imagine the grief of losing your child and I want to recognize them for raising their brave voices at this time.

This government is listening – Minister More has details today on new funding that has just been approved to

help make sure victims and their families can get the help they need no matter where they live -- and foster community partnerships that prevent sexual violence from happening in the first place.

From prevention to legislation, we need to make sure that we do what we can as a society, so that youth, women, children, men and vulnerable people do not have to live in fear of violence -- in all of its forms, to make sure we build a compassionate and caring Nova Scotia.

There are so many people across this province who have struggled for help and funding to address the gaps in our services to victims. Thank you for your efforts to make Nova Scotia a better place.

I'd also like to take a moment now to recognize the work that Marilyn More has done in the last few weeks leading up the Action Team on Sexual Violence and Bullying to reach out to the community, coordinate government

efforts, and start Nova Scotians on a path towards a society where sexual violence and bullying are no longer tolerated.

In closing, there's something I want to say, as a man and the father of a son. Sexual assault is a crime that can happen to anyone -- of any gender, race, age, or background. I realize that a woman can be a perpetrator. But most of the time it is a man. I urge all men and boys out there: "Don't be that guy".

I also urge you to help create a culture where we can talk about healthy relationships and consensual sex. I urge you to advocate for change.

Be that kind of guy!

And if you need help, if you have been a victim too, now is the time to get help. Be silent no more.

Now is the time to take action. This is an issue I care deeply about. I will continue to work with you all to shine a light on sexual violence and I sincerely thank you for your efforts and commitment.

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