

Letter Template to Claudia Chender

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TO	Claudia Chender, Leader of the Nova Scotia NDP and Official Opposition
EMAIL	ClaudiaChender@nsmla.ca
SUBJECT	Request for Opposition Action on Gender-Based Violence and Government Accountability

Dear Ms. Chender,

I am writing regarding the misogynistic and harmful material created and released by Nova Scotia Energy Minister Marco MacLeod, and the provincial government's response to it.

I am asking you, as Leader of the Official Opposition, to publicly challenge the Houston government's response and press for meaningful accountability.

Nova Scotia has publicly committed to preventing gender-based violence and teaching young people how to recognize and respond to the attitudes, behaviours, and social conditions that contribute to it. In 2025, the Grade 9 Healthy Living curriculum was revised to include gender-based violence prevention and bystander intervention. Students are asked to:

"Analyse the ways that societal conditions, norms, and behaviours can contribute to gender-based violence"

and

"Investigate ways to counter behaviours that contribute to gender-based violence."

The curriculum further teaches that responding involves "noticing, interpreting, taking responsibility, knowing how to act, and acting."

These are important lessons for our young people. They are also principles that should be modelled by the adults entrusted with leading our province.

I reject attempts to minimize misogynistic behaviour by pointing to Minister MacLeod's age when the material was created. Being younger does not make misogyny harmless. People can grow and change, but meaningful change requires acknowledgement, responsibility, and action.

Gender-based violence does not begin with physical violence. It exists within a broader culture of attitudes, language, narratives, and social norms that normalize misogyny and the degradation and dehumanization of women. Challenging gender-based violence means challenging the conditions that enable it, not excusing or minimizing them when doing so becomes uncomfortable.

Nova Scotia knows the consequences of gender-based violence all too well. The recommendations of the Mass Casualty Commission called upon governments, institutions, and communities to take meaningful action to prevent gender-based violence and address the conditions that allow it to persist. Our government's commitments arising from those recommendations must extend beyond curriculum documents and classrooms.

There is a profound contradiction in teaching Nova Scotia's young people to recognize harmful social norms, take responsibility, and intervene while accepting a different standard from members of their provincial government.

I am asking you and the Nova Scotia NDP caucus to use your position in the Legislature to demand answers from Premier Houston and his government. Specifically, I ask that you press the government to explain what accountability will follow and how its response is consistent with its stated commitments to gender-based violence prevention and bystander intervention.

This is an opportunity for our elected representatives to demonstrate that preventing gender-based violence requires more than teaching young people what they should do. It requires those in positions of power to act when those principles are tested.

I would appreciate hearing how you and your caucus intend to respond to this issue.

Sincerely,

[Your Name]

[Community/Constituency, optional]

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