

Justice and Public Safety

April 25, 2017

Minister Parsons Announces Support for Victims of Sexual Assault

The Provincial Government is pleased to announce funding for a new program to help survivors of sexual assault. The Sexual Assault Response Pilot Program will provide free independent legal advice on criminal matters, to help victims make informed decisions about the court process.

The Honourable Andrew Parsons, Minister of Justice and Public Safety and Attorney General in Newfoundland and Labrador, and the Honourable Jody Wilson-Raybould Minister of Justice and Attorney General for Canada, made the announcement earlier today in St. John's.

Funded by Federal Government, the Department of Justice and Public Safety will receive \$250,000 per year, for three years, to support the program.

This valuable initiative will complement existing supports provided by government's Victim Services. In consultation with community, federal and provincial stakeholders, a program will be developed that is sensitive to the additional information needs and supports often required by survivors of sexual assault.>

The department will identify the skills and competencies required of lawyers providing legal advice to survivors of sexual violence. Complementary, trauma informed, professional development opportunities will be identified and provided to ensure sensitivity to survivors' needs.

Quotes

"I am pleased that we can now begin this important work. While I encourage victims to come forward and will work to make the system responsive to their needs, the reality is many sexual assaults go unreported and of those that are reported, the rate of conviction is low. Providing free, independent legal advice to sexual assault survivors will empower them to make choices that allow them to heal from traumatic situations."


Honourable Andrew Parsons
Minister of Justice and Public Safety and Attorney General

"A well-functioning justice system is one that serves all Canadians, protects the vulnerable and the rights of all Canadians. Public confidence in the criminal justice system is essential and building this confidence requires that we address the significant barriers survivors of sexual assault face in reporting the crimes to police and testifying in court. This funding will help victims of sexual violence better understand and participate more effectively in the court process."

Honourable Jody Wilson-Raybould
Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada

For information on justice services available to victims of crime visit

www.justice.gov.nl.ca/just/victim_services/.

More information on Victim Services can be found at www.victimserviceshelp.ca/. 

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Media contacts

Lesley Clarke

Justice and Public Safety

709-729-6985, 699-2910

LesleyClarke@gov.nl.ca

Media Relations

Department of Justice Canada

613-957-4207

media@justice.gc.ca

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