

MEMBER STATEMENT—JULIE GREEN, MLA YELLOWKNIFE CENTRE

SEXUAL ABUSE IN AMATEUR SPORT

February 12, 2019

MS. GREEN: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, many of us will have heard the shocking and disturbing revelations of this week's CBC Sports investigation into sexual abuse in amateur sport. For those who haven't heard, here is a summary of the findings.

The CBC investigation found that at least 222 amateur sport coaches in Canada had been convicted of sexual offences in the last 20 years. Those convictions involve more than 600 victims under the age of 18. Thirty-four cases are before the courts, including new charges against a Hay River swimming coach previously convicted of sexual assault in 2015. Because sexual abuse is an underreported crime, experts say there could be thousands of cases still unreported.

No sport is immune, Mr. Speaker. Hockey and soccer are Canada's most-played sports and have the largest number of coaches charged and convicted, but convictions were found in 36 other sports.

Anti-abuse policies exist at the national and subnational levels, but transparency is lacking. CBC journalists contacted 160 sports organizations across Canada and asked if they had a public list of coaches and volunteers who have been banned and/or charged or convicted of a crime. Only half responded, and of those, only seven said they publish some form of this information online. Importantly, Hockey Canada didn't respond at all.

Local clubs are often on their own. After multiple sexual assault cases involving Canadian national team coaches, the federal Sports Minister introduced new anti-abuse rules that national sports organizations must follow in order to get federal funding, but that doesn't protect hundreds of thousands of kids competing below the elite level. Local clubs and associations often lack the resources to enforce measures like background checks that could make a difference.

All of this makes me wonder about the situation here. There are clear, common-sense steps that can be taken that do not require a lot of resources to achieve. MACA working with Sport North and other organizations could help supply clear rules around sexual abuse and promote training for coaches, parents, and players. We also need clear and easily accessible ways to report suspected abuse. I will have questions for the Minister of Municipal and Community Affairs. Mahsi.