

**MEMBER'S STATEMENT — JULIE GREEN, MLA YELLOWKNIFE CENTRE  
THIRD-PARTY REPORTING AND OVERSIGHT OF SEXUAL ASSAULTS**

**March 11, 2020**

**MS. GREEN:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My statement today is about some important work done near the end of the last Assembly and which I hope will continue. I'm talking about third-party reporting of sexual assaults and third-party oversight of sexual assault files. Mr. Speaker, here in the NWT, we have high rates of sexual assault, especially for Indigenous women, and low rates for reporting that crime. Statistics Canada found that only one in twenty sexual assaults are reported to the police.

The reasons for not reporting are diverse, ranging from shame and guilt to the perception that sexual assault is not a crime. In order to increase rates of reporting, some jurisdictions have set up third-party reporting, where someone who has experienced sexual assault can go to a non-profit organization, for example, and make a report rather than go directly to police. Mr. Speaker, the Department of Justice brought a group of people together to discuss this issue over two days last June. They came from all regions of the NWT and from non-profits, victim services, health authorities, the RCMP, and the GNWT. According to the *What We Heard* report, the group anticipated there would be a high volume of sexual assault survivors who would use this third-party reporting service if it was implemented. They saw the major benefit as giving survivors a barrier-free opportunity to tell their stories and feel heard. This change may also help to improve service delivery to survivors. They identified the major challenge as whether NWT non-profits with paid staff have the capacity to take on this responsibility. It may be possible to train staff in existing organizations to provide this service when protocols are agreed for collecting and passing on the information.

Mr. Speaker, the other issue discussed was third-party oversight of the RCMP files. The point of this initiative is to increase public confidence in the way police respond to sexual assault complaints, by reviewing their files. The review team could make recommendations about conducting more interviews or ask questions. The RCMP has already completed the privacy and security work required to make this kind of advocacy feasible, and review teams are in place in Ontario. Mr. Speaker, I am grateful that the Department of Justice has completed this step, and I hope to see it implemented without any delay. Thank you very much.