

MEMBER'S STATEMENT — JULIE GREEN, MLA YELLOWKNIFE CENTRE
ENFORCEMENT OF CHIEF PUBLIC HEALTH OFFICER'S ORDERS IN APARTMENT
BUILDINGS
May 27, 2020

MS. GREEN: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Today, I am going to talk about issues relating to the enforcement of the Chief Public Health Officer's orders in apartment buildings. I have heard many complaints from constituents about orders not being followed despite the creation of the Enforcement Task Force at the beginning of April.

Mr. Speaker, most of the complaints are about people gathering inside who are not part of the same household. About two-thirds of the constituents in Yellowknife Centre live in apartments and condos, so their neighbours' behaviour has a direct impact on them. Here is a sample of what I heard.

On April 13, one constituent said, "I don't know what's the point in all my email and calls to this GNWT line if no one is actually going to do anything. For the past four days, I've been calling about unit 106. In the past two hours, I've kicked out nine people, and there are people in and out of there every three minutes."

On April 15, another constituent in a different apartment building said, "Why is it okay for the neighbours to have people coming and going non-stop and partying non-stop when we are all facing something bigger than ourselves? This type of negligence shouldn't be tolerated. The amount of traffic has not slowed down here since this illness has began."

These complaints highlight a grey area in enforcement. Landlords, including public housing, seem to be reluctant to stop the parties. Without their say so, bylaw won't go into apartment building for noise complaints. I've been told the RCMP aren't responding to complaints about ignoring the public health orders. That leaves the enforcement task force. On this front, they have been missing in action.

Mr. Speaker, it's my understanding that the enforcement task force has focused on public education about the health orders. That's a good idea since we are all new to this kind of lockdown. But what happens when people ignore and flout the orders? The enforcement task force has access to progressive sanctions for not following the public health orders, but no one in the NWT has received anything more substantial than a written warning. While that action may be adequate in most situations, it is not working in the Yellowknife Centre apartment buildings.

Mr. Speaker, here's why this issue matters: many of my constituents in apartment buildings are vulnerable to this virus because they have pre-existing conditions. They are trying hard to keep themselves safe, but in some cases their neighbours are undermining their efforts. The parties

believe there aren't any consequences, and shockingly, it seems they are right. I will have questions for the MACA Minister. Thank you.