



Media Release



In response to the announcement of \$21.4 million from Ministers Diane Cunningham and David Young, the YWCA & the Woman Abuse Council of Toronto applaud some of the measures announced. However, we are concerned about the one-time nature of the funding and the missed opportunity for ongoing support for this important issue.

What's Good?

We are thrilled that the government has heard our call for reforms in the Children's Law Reform Act to ensure that the violence of an abuser is taken into account in the determination of custody and access

We think the \$5 million for the enhancement of shelter safety, including the addition of wheelchair ramps is also a welcome enhancement of the aging shelter system across the province.

Public education is a very necessary part of the prevention of violence against women, and the \$5 million investment in it is an important part of an overall strategy.

We are relieved that the Province is beginning to speak about the need for housing as part of the overall picture that will allow abused women to leave their violence spouses, as laid out most clearly in the Hadley Inquest Jury Recommendations.

What's Missing?

We know that reform to custody and access has been undertaken in other jurisdictions, and that the wording of this must be backed up by training of the people making the decisions that effect the victims and witnesses: the lawyers and the judges in the Family Court System.

The \$5 million one time shelter capital funding does not replace the need for increased core funding which has not kept pace with inflation and operating costs in an ongoing way.

Let's make sure that the proposed \$5million for public education doesn't all go to advertising agencies and that our schools and other institutions will be able to carry out and sustain this important work.

The Province's housing announcement is unclear. Transfer and priority criteria exclude those women who have left the abusive spouse, but who continue to be stalked, and the new beds proposed are simply a re-announcement of the federal Affordable Housing Agreement, with no clear criteria for either providers or occupants that would make it responsive to victims of domestic violence.

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