

MEMBER STATEMENT—KEVIN O'REILLY MLA FRAME LAKE

INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY

March 8, 2018

MR. O'REILLY: Merci, Monsieur le President. Today is International Women's Day. In honour of this day, I reached out to a thoughtful, formidable, and passionate advocate of women's rights for her views to consider on this day. Here are the observations and advice from our daughter, Amber Adzeza Montreuil O'Reilly.

She said that women's ability to be active in the public and political sphere is greatly influenced by their ability to access education, childcare, reproductive rights, and domestic equality. Safe, non-judgmental spaces where youth and women are encouraged to ask questions, share their views, and participate in campaigns are needed to develop the confidence, knowledge, and skills to take a stance on political issues.

She said that all men need to value and respect not only the women in their circle of friends and family, but the women in their workplaces, communities, and societies. This means active listening, supporting female candidates, and implementing policies to close the wage and opportunities gap.

Intersectional feminism takes into consideration the various social pressures an individual may be facing in addition to being female, such as racism, homophobia, and ableism. In celebrating diversity and creating more opportunities for political involvement, our daughter said we must not neglect these realities nor the voices of trans women and non-binary individuals.

Our daughter established these views in part through her participation in this Assembly's Youth Parliament and the various parliamentary simulations offered through the French-Canadian Youth Network. These experiences were instrumental in furthering her understanding of legislative process, party politics and consensus government, public speaking, and debate. These opportunities offer youth the ability to clearly articulate and defend their opinions as well as engage in dialogue with people who may not share them. Open dialogue about current issues at schools and at home are crucial for youth to exercise their critical thinking skills and find their voices.

In taking her place in the world, our daughter has benefited from the advancements in individual freedom, the battle against misogyny, and the efforts to improve gender equity. That's the start of the road to full equality. I call upon us all to be leaders in building a world of equality for our daughters and all women.

Happy International Women's Day. Masi, Mr. Speaker.