

**KEVIN O'REILLY, MLA FRAME LAKE**

**June 11, 2020**

**MOTION 11-19(2):  
CREATION OF A NORTHWEST TERRITORIES SENIORS AND ELDERS'  
STRATEGY, CARRIED**

**MR. O'REILLY:** Merci, Monsieur le President. I stand in support of the motion. There are a growing number of seniors across the Northwest Territories, and I am one of them, or will be soon enough. Part of the issue here, I think, Mr. Speaker, is that the issue of seniors cuts across several departments within this government; Health and Social Services, Housing, Municipal and Community Affairs. Most of our departments have some responsibility, some part of their programs and services that are dedicated and targeted toward seniors, but we don't really have a whole-of-government approach, and I think that's what is really required here, Mr. Speaker.

Often, the issues that seniors face are complex. You know, they relate often to areas around housing, transportation, accessibility, social isolation, abuse, and, once again, these matters cut across a number of different departments. We have a very enthusiastic Minister responsible for Seniors, and I do want to give him credit. Unfortunately, he doesn't have any resources to work with within the government. I shouldn't say that; he is able to, I guess, draw on the resources that are there, but I think, when we have a Minister responsible for Seniors or a Minister responsible for Youth, we need to find ways to support that function, rather than just have them as figureheads. They often will need some sort of support, a secretariat, somebody who can help them lead the charge in terms of policy development when it cuts across various departments, and so on. Part of my objective in supporting this motion is to get the Minister responsible for Seniors the kind of support that is needed to help develop this kind of strategy, that cuts across many areas that our government provides services and programs in.

I am pleased to support this motion, and I look forward to all of the Regular MLAs on this side of the House voting in favour. You know, the way this works, to explain this to the public, is that Cabinet often abstains from these kinds of motions because it provides direction to them and maybe creates a bit of a perception of some kind of conflict of interest, or something, but I expect that most of our colleagues on the other side of the House actually support this, as well, but, just out of convention, they can't stand in support of it. However, I know that their hearts are in the right place and they support this initiative, as well. Also, I do want to acknowledge and thank the mover and the seconder in bringing forward this important matter of public interest, and commend them for their actions. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.