



Natalie Pierre, MPP
Suite 306, 3027 Harvester Rd.
Burlington, ON L7N 3G7

October 28, 2025

Dear Ms. Pierre,

Thank you very much for the significant work you are doing for the residents of Burlington.

I am writing on behalf of the Burlington Chapter of CFUW (Canadian Federation of University Women), a national organization with 90 Clubs across Canada and over 6,800 members. Throughout its 106-year history, CFUW has worked to achieve an equitable world in which individuals are educated and empowered to make transformative changes in their communities and beyond.

CFUW Burlington is very concerned about the serious issues of overcrowding, inhumane conditions, and violence in many of Ontario's prisons. These ongoing concerns have been widely publicized in multiple news outlets over the past several years, with especially horrific reports emerging from the Ottawa-Carlton Detention Centre and Maplehurst/Vanier Correctional Complex in nearby Milton. Conditions like triple-bunking, violations of basic human rights, lack of access to education, and increased violence are significantly exacerbated by staffing shortages, as noted in a recent report from Ontario's Ombudsman, Paul Dubé: "Jails' Growing Crisis Cannot be Ignored". Furthermore, the John Howard Society and the Ontario Human Rights Commission report that the misuse of segregation (formerly solitary confinement) is disproportionately administered to the most vulnerable of the prison population - e.g., Indigenous, Black, and female inmates, as well as those with mental health disabilities. It's important to remember that most inmates have not been convicted, and the majority are still awaiting trial.

Education is a key factor in reducing recidivism. Many inmates wish to continue their education while incarcerated, but it is difficult for them to access the necessary materials to do so. As reported by Brendan Kennedy in the Toronto Star, "Getting an Education Lowers a Prisoner's Likelihood of Reoffending," but Ontario makes it almost impossible for inmates to take online courses.

While the province is investing in adding new jail beds and expanding facilities, many experts argue this is only a temporary solution and that the focus should instead be on addressing root causes through community-based solutions, increased opportunities for education, and hiring more trained staff.

CFUW Burlington would greatly appreciate you using your position in the Ontario legislature to highlight the value of various levels of government working together proactively to eliminate overcrowding and inhumane conditions in Ontario's prisons. We would be happy to support you in your efforts.

Thank you very much for your consideration of this important matter.

Ruth Levkoe, President

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