

Hon. Tim Houston
Office of the Premier

May 13, 2025

Dear Premier Houston,

I am writing to follow up on the ongoing conversation surrounding the Survivors of Gender-based Violence Benefit. While we appreciate your commitment to look into the program after support was repeatedly denied for one of my constituents, I must bring your attention to a second troubling case.

The second woman, who fled an unsafe living situation with an abusive partner, recently came to my office after being denied the gender-based violence rent supplement because her lease lists the name of her property management company, rather than the owner of the building. My office helped her resolve the issue and she will begin to receive the supplement in June. However, she first applied for the supplement in the middle of March, which means she will have waited 2.5 months from when she applied to when she will receive her first payment. Women trying to escape violent relationships shouldn't be running into barriers like these.

This marks the second case – that we know of – where unnecessary bureaucratic barriers are blocking access to the Survivors of Gender-based Violence Benefit. Your government talks frequently about the need to cut red tape, yet survivors of gender-based violence continue to face obstacle after obstacle while trying to flee abuse and access the programs that are supposed to help them rebuild their lives.

When I raised the first case with you on March 7, you committed to looking into the program's barriers to ensure it fulfills its intended purpose. Given this new case, I urge you to provide an update on this review. Clearly, the system is not properly supporting all the people it is meant to protect.

Survivors of gender-based violence in Nova Scotia deserve to know that help is there when they need it. I welcome the opportunity to meet with you and discuss how we can enhance the Survivors of Gender-based Violence Benefit to better serve those who need it the most.

Thank you,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Susan Leblanc".

Susan Leblanc
NSNDP Critic for the Status of Women
MLA, Dartmouth North