



HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY

Andrew Furey, Premier of Newfoundland and Labrador
P.O. Box 8700
Confederation Building
St. John's, NL A1B 4J6

*Added by me in person
for St. John's Centre
- with leave
Hawley George
October 17, 2023*

October 4th, 2023

Dear Premier,

What is your government's plan to address homelessness and provide safe housing for these vulnerable individuals living in tents near the Confederation Building and?

The housing crisis is not improving. I'm deeply concerned about people facing homelessness this winter, particularly those on the streets. I previously raised this issue in the House of Assembly but received no clear commitment from the government. The situation has worsened. I worry that already vulnerable people will be exposed to the elements and their physical, mental, and emotional well-being will be further undermined.

People are living in tents, sleeping on the street, in bus shelters, in the back of people's pickup trucks, or in people's sheds because the options offered by government do not address the needs. Many are reluctant to use emergency shelters due to safety concerns. Despite government claims of taking housing issues seriously, services remain inadequate as homelessness persists. I have called the shelter line on behalf of people I met on the street only to be told that there are no beds available. Their only option is to sleep outdoors.

The province is in this vicious downward spiral because of your government's failure to live up to its responsibility, create supportive housing, and invest significantly in non-market community-based housing and reluctance to implement rent control. Since forming government almost 10 years ago, the approach to housing has not been proactive, instead government has relied on outdated approaches and proposed no new big bold ideas. It's clear the province has no plan to address the housing crisis.

I have written the Minister of Digital Government and Service NL to implement some form of rent control to prevent people on fixed and low incomes from being displaced only to have the recommendation dismissed. The Minister of Children, Seniors, and Social Development stated his department made the tenters aware of services they could apply for but the wait list is long. The government continues to focus on the costly reliance on emergency shelters. That is not a housing plan that serves the people of the province.

If you wish to discuss solutions, my caucus is ready to contribute.

Sincerely,

James Dinn, M.H.A.
District of St. John's Centre

