

Dear Minister Kang, Minister Farnworth, Parliamentary Secretary Lore, and Premier Horgan,

We are writing this letter to call attention to the pervasive issue of sexualized and gender-based violence in post-secondary environments in BC, and across the country. This National Day for Remembrance and Action on Gender-Based Violence, we are once again reminded that our post-secondary institutions continue to be sites where violence is perpetrated and many people suffer without proper access to care. In responding to these issues, the voices and needs of survivors must be considered first and foremost, not institutional reputation. While we are appreciative of the ongoing work that this government has initiated to address gender-based and sexualized violence, we know that more needs to be done -- urgently.

**This is a call to action.** The students of the University of Victoria stand in solidarity with survivors and allies across the country as part of the national Safe Campus Walk Out to demand that our provincial leadership do more. We call upon the provincial government to:

- Properly invest in sexualized violence prevention and response in post-secondary institutions, beginning with an annual investment of \$5 million per year, over the next three years, towards targeted on-campus initiatives; and
- Conduct a fulsome review of the Sexual Violence and Misconduct Policy Act, including extensive consultations with students and survivors, to ensure the legislation includes minimum standards of care for survivors, and proper accountability mechanisms for institutions.

This essential work requires ongoing, sustainable funding. Much of this work is conducted in conditions of scarcity, which can lead to high degrees of burnout and compounding harm for survivors.<sup>1</sup> While the Ministry of Advanced Education and Skills Training has developed several important initiatives through the one-time investment of \$760,000 in 2019, far more resources are required to ensure that our post-secondary institutions can properly respond to the needs of their campus communities. Funding must address gender-based and sexualized violence holistically and be eligible for improving education initiatives, culturally-located supports for survivors, and be accessible to student organizations doing work to end violence.

The Sexual Violence and Misconduct Policy Act (Act 23) was an important step in developing proper institutional responses to sexualized violence, however, the current legislation is woefully inadequate. Act 23 includes very limited guidelines and accountability mechanisms, leaving significant gaps where harmful practices continue to be perpetuated. The current government

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<sup>1</sup> Quinlan, Elizabeth, Allyson Clarke, and Natasha Miller. "Enhancing Care and Advocacy for Sexual Assault Survivors on Canadian Campuses." *The Canadian Journal of Higher Education* 46, no. 2 (2016): 48.

<http://search.proquest.com.ezproxy.library.uvic.ca/scholarly-journals/enhancing-care-advocacy-sexual-assault-survivors/docview/1824510824/se-2>.

has a critical opportunity to act as a leader for the rest of the country on campus sexualized violence by building legislation that reflects the needs and perspectives of survivors.

We are encouraged by the promise of a provincial and national Action Plan to End Gender-based Violence as a critical opportunity to bring about these changes, and we hope to see survivor and student voices meaningfully included in its development.

We wish to reiterate the urgency of these calls to action, and eagerly await your reply. If sexualized and gender-based violence truly have no place on our campuses, then steps must be taken to make this a reality.

Sincerely,

UVic Student Walkout to End Gender-Based Violence

**UVic Student Walkout to  
End Gender-  
Based Violence**

University of Victoria Students' Society



Anti-Violence Project



Gender Empowerment Centre



Students for Consent Culture Canada / Étudiants pour une culture de consentement



Safe Campus Coalition

