

Statement to the Legislature

**By
The Honourable Laurel Broten
Minister Responsible for Women's Issues**

**NATIONAL DAY OF REMEMBRANCE AND ACTION ON VIOLENCE AGAINST
WOMEN**

Queen's Park

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Check Against Delivery

Mr. Speaker, today, on the National Day of Remembrance and Action on Violence Against Women, we honour the 14 female engineering students whose lives were tragically cut short at l'École Polytechnique de Montréal.

We must never forget that the horrible events of December 6, 1989, were caused by gender discrimination. The acts of that day, 21 years ago, are a stark reminder of one terrible fact: women are at risk of violence because they are women.

Mr. Speaker, I was about the same age as these women when they died. This tragedy changed us as a generation, as women and as a society.

This tragedy pointed then and still does, to the inequality that is at the root of violence against women.

Whether it is the sexual exploitation of women through human trafficking or the high number of missing and murdered aboriginal women across Canada, we see that inequality—in all its forms—reinforces violence against women.

The rose button we wear today signifies a commitment to never condone or remain silent about violence against women. It is a symbol that we will continue to strive to eliminate the gap in equality between men and women.

We can make a difference as individuals. It starts with each of us asking ourselves “what can I do?” Equality grows with each of our efforts.

Let's teach our boys and girls to value each other as equals and to demonstrate respect. As adults we can lead by example.

As a woman, who felt the tragedy at l'École Polytechnique de Montréal so personally, I want to ensure that this day is always remembered and always serves to mobilize us.

As a Cabinet Minister Responsible for Women's Issues, I want to ensure that women live without fear of violence at home, at work or in their communities.

As leaders, we can ensure that all girls have equal access to all the benefits of society; to grow up, go to school and reach their potential with confidence and without gender-based violence.

Each of us has a role to play.

Mr. Speaker, November 25, was the International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women. We wore a white ribbon to recognize the role men can play in ending violence against women. The day began the internationally-sanctioned 16 Days of Activism Against Gender based Violence which continues through to December 10th.

Today, on the National Day of Remembrance and Action on Violence Against Women, I ask that all Members join me in wearing a red rose button. Wearing this rose, we remember women whose lives have been cut short by violence, including those who died in Montreal on December 6, 1989. Let us take a moment to remember and acknowledge 14 lives lived and tragically lost:

Geneviève Bergeron, age 21

Hélène Colgan, age 23

Nathalie Croteau, age 23

Barbara Daigneault, age 22

Anne-Marie Edward, age 21

Maud Haviernick, age 29

Barbara Klucznik-Widajewicz, age 31

Maryse Laganière, age 25

Maryse Leclair, age 23

Anne-Marie Lemay, age 27

Sonia Pelletier, age 23

Michèle Richard, age 21

Annie St-Arneault, age 23

Annie Turcotte, age 21

Let us all ensure these young women will remain forever in our memory and in our hearts.