

KATRINA NOKLEBY

FOR **MLA GREAT SLAVE**



Thank you for this opportunity to answer your questions. I appreciate all the hard work your organization does in trying to make life better for children and youth in the NWT.

- 1. As a member of the 19th Legislative Assembly, will you work to ensure the territorial government implements changes in response to the 2018 Auditor General's Report on the Child & Family Services in the NWT during the first year of the 19th Legislative Assembly?**

Yes, I would commit to including this as a priority in the first year of the next Assembly. Issues such as poverty, addictions, cost of living, and violence are adversely affecting children in the Northwest Territories and we must do better. We have alarming suicide rates and one of the worst graduation rates in the country. We need to work harder to address our social issues so that we are giving the children of the territory the best possible start they can have.

- 2. Please state the actions that you will take in the 19th Legislative Assembly that will improve the welfare of children and youth in care in the territory.**

Poverty is a huge issue affecting children and youth in the territory, and poverty is often mistaken for neglect or abuse. We need to ensure we have programs in place that support the family and teach parents the skills they need to raise healthy children. We must address addictions issues and provide mental health support not only to addicts but for their families as well. The intergenerational trauma created by the residential school system is a huge barrier to healthy families and I would like to see even more funding in place for professional counsellors to deal with this issue. I would like to see the reinstatement of the social work program at Aurora College, and ensure that any new Polytechnic University include mental health training programs so that we can have more northern professionals working with children and youth rather than trying to impose southern-style solutions on them.

- 3. How will you ensure that the voices of children, youth, foster caregivers, adoptive families, and biological families involved with Health and Social Services are heard?**

We need to continuously solicit feedback from all people involved with the foster family system in the Northwest Territories. We need to make informed decisions based on data and we need to be able to change and adapt policies when evidence shows us something isn't currently working. Our system needs to be flexible to deal with individual cases and there needs to be open dialogue between all parties that are involved with a child. Not only rely on the "experts" to decide the course of action for the children. And we need to ensure the children themselves have a safe space where they can feel free to discuss their fears openly.

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