

15 October 2019

Re: Dementia and criminal justice reform

Dear Ms. Campbell Pope,

Thank you for your letter on the improvements needed for access to justice for criminal defendants with dementia. We appreciate your ongoing advocacy.

A Green government will live up to our responsibility to care for vulnerable Canadians by strengthening social supports, including implementing a guaranteed liveable income, universal pharmacare, improved public transportation, home retrofits, and affordable housing initiatives. All of these policies are guided by our underlying commitment to social justice and equity, including in the delivery of services.

Within 25 years, the number of Canadians living with a form of dementia could reach 1.3 million, imposing the highest economic, social, and health costs of all diseases. We have to be proactive with regard to diseases like dementia and Alzheimers.

Greens will develop and fund a national dementia strategy, which will support research and improve the quality of life not just for patients, but for caregivers as well. We need to educate the public and increase awareness about this disease so we can reduce the stigma currently surrounding it.

But as you rightly point out, there are many issues affecting persons with dementia, including within the criminal justice system. It is clear from your research that the justice system is failing those persons, and that reforms are urgently needed. We look forward to working with your organization, and others, through our national dementia strategy to pursue regulatory and legislative reforms affecting criminal justice processes, maintaining a presence of justice professionals to ensure that this issue remains part of the national conversation.

An essential outcome of the social contract between government and citizens is to make sure people can live in a fulfilling and dignified way throughout their lives. Greens will be committed to fulfilling this contract.

We would be happy to discuss this matter further after the election. Please feel free to reach out and Ms. May's office will be happy to help you arrange a meeting. We look forward to working with you to help bring true justice to persons with dementia.

Best regards,

Steve Parkinson
Director of Policy
Green Party of Canada