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News Release

Tona's Law Is in the House as Senate Steps Up for Prisoners' Human Rights

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

OTTAWA, DECEMBER 11, 2024—Last night, the Senate passed [Tona's Law, Bill S-230](#), a culmination of years of work on the human rights of federal prisoners. The House of Commons now has the opportunity to pass this vital bill into law.

Tona's Law consists of safeguards tirelessly advocated by Tona Mills, an Indigenous woman and survivor of more than 10 years in solitary confinement and of the stark and irreversible health consequences of isolation. Before she succumbs to terminal cancer, Tona hoped to see legal measures that might prevent what happened to her from happening to anyone else.

Last night marks the third time the Senate has voted in favour of the Tona's Law measures. The first time was in 2019, as [amendments](#) to legislation on solitary confinement that the government ultimately declined. The second was in 2021, when the Senate endorsed its [Human Rights Committee's report](#) on federally sentenced persons.

While the government promised to eliminate solitary confinement in federal prisons in 2019, as underscored by [its own data](#), these inhumane conditions of isolation continue. In the meantime, already limited forms of oversight, including a ministerial advisory panel and a group of independent external decision-makers, have been [eroded and undermined](#).

"We know that those exposed to the harms of isolation are disproportionately Black Canadians, Indigenous Peoples, and those with mental health issues," said MP Blake Desjarlais, the House sponsor of Tona's Law. "As Tona has so clearly articulated, we must make this stop. I look forward to working with my colleagues in the House to do just that."

"With only months left to live, Tona is unwaveringly and courageously calling Canada to action," said Senate sponsor, Senator Kim Pate. "Senators and MPs must work together to answer her call. We cannot abandon the countless Canadians condemned to isolation in federal prisons. Canada must take a stand for human rights."

For more information:

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