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News Release

Courts Are Revealing Systemic Abuse of Prisoners' Human Rights. Tona's Law Will Give Them the Tools to Respond.

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

OTTAWA, JUNE 3, 2025— As courts grapple with the consequences of extended periods of isolation, segregation and solitary confinement in prisons, not to mention staff-on-staff harassment and mass abuse of prisoners, Senator Kim Pate opened debate on Tona's Law. [Bill S-205](#), aims to respond meaningfully to human rights violations in federal prisons. The Senate has voted to support the provisions of the proposed legislation three times in the last six years.

Returning the bill to the House of Commons, where it was awaiting study prior to the last election, could be a game changer for courts across Canada struggling with how to redress cultures of impunity in federal and provincial jails.

Recent events at federal and provincial institutions, such as those in the media this week relating to the [Maplehurst jail](#), provide a rare opportunity for the public to glimpse systemic abuses that are rife behind prison walls.

This is the backdrop to what led [two federal prison guards to take their lives](#) following years of harassment by coworkers and underscores recent findings by courts of [deadly fight clubs run by prison guards](#) and [punitive uses of inhumane solitary confinement](#), as well as judicial decision making to [interfere with the continued isolation](#) of a man with disabling mental health issues triggered by massive childhood trauma and abuse.

Tona's Law consists of safeguards, including court oversight, recommended for decades by [experts](#) and tirelessly advocated by Tona Mills, an Indigenous woman whose mental health was nearly destroyed by more than 10 years in solitary confinement. Before she succumbs to terminal cancer, Tona hopes to see legal measures that might prevent what happened to her from happening to anyone else.

"In a prison system that is meant to lead by example and provide accountability, it is time for the federal government to step up and remedy past and ongoing wrongs," said Senator Pate. "Tona's Law could help ensure oversight, remedies and alternatives to solitary confinement and

end horrific abuses perpetrated and condoned by prison authorities. Canada must end human rights abuses now."

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