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News Release

18th Anniversary of the Death of Ashley Smith: Will the Senate Step Up to End Seg?

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

OTTAWA, MONDAY, OCTOBER 20, 2025—This weekend marked the 18th anniversary of the death of 19-year-old Ashley Smith alone on the floor of a segregation cell. As sponsor of [Bill S-205](#), Senator Kim Pate calls on Senators and Members of Parliament to honour Ashley's memory through urgent action to implement the key recommendation of the inquest jury and eliminate solitary confinement and segregation in federal prisons. Canada must end the travesties that took the lives of Ashley and too many others.

Ashley's death, while those tasked with her care and custody looked on, was ruled preventable by the Office of the Correctional Investigator and a homicide by the jury at the inquest into her death. The inquest echoed decades of findings recognizing solitary confinement and segregation as deeply inhumane, particularly for women, Indigenous Peoples, and those with mental health issues.

Reports from the [Correctional Investigator](#), a [ministerial Implementation Advisory Panel](#) and [Senators](#) highlight that government promises to end solitary confinement and segregation in 2019, in response to successful court challenges, instead perpetuated these practices under other names while eliminating some of the few, already inadequate accountability mechanisms that once existed.

Tona's Law, Bill S-205, consists of measures advocated by Tona—a woman who like Ashley was subjected to torturous conditions of isolation—so that no one else experiences what they and too many others have endured. It was passed by the Senate last year but had to be reintroduced following the last federal election.

"I trust my colleagues to honour Ashley's memory and her family's wishes that we alleviate their heartbreak and ongoing disappointment," said Senator Pate. "Together, through Bill S-205, we can fulfill multiple decades of promises of reform, oversee remediation of past wrongs, and make Canada a global human rights leader and guardian of justice."