

## NIKI ASHTON

MP - Churchill

### Thompson Office

83 Churchill Drive, Suite 307  
Thompson, Manitoba R8N 0L6  
Phone: (204) 677-1333  
Fax: (204) 677-1339

### Ottawa Office

263 Confederation Building  
House of Commons  
Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0A6  
Phone: (613) 992-3018  
Fax: (613) 996-5817  
Website: [nikiashton.ndp.ca](http://nikiashton.ndp.ca)  
Email: [niki.ashton@parl.gc.ca](mailto:niki.ashton@parl.gc.ca)

### The Pas Office

P.O. Box 2820 - 1416 Gordon Avenue  
The Pas, Manitoba R9A 1M6  
Phone: (204) 627-8716  
Fax.: (204) 627-8717  
Toll free: (866) 785-0522



June 11, 2013

Dear Minister Baird,

My colleague Mr. Paul Dewar and I are writing to you in regards to Canada's participation in the 23rd session of the United Nations Human Rights Council.

As you are aware, this year Canada is the chair of the negotiations for the Council's annual resolution on violence against women. We wish to ensure that Canada is using its position as chair to advance existing commitments to take action on sexual violence against women, including recommendations made at the UN Commission on the Status of Women in March of this year. We are concerned by a recent media release from Action Canada on Population and Development, who are attending the session in Geneva, indicating that Canada has been seeking to renege on previously-agreed upon policy measures to take action on violence against women.

We would like to take this opportunity to stress the importance of a comprehensive package of services that should be available to survivors of sexual violence. Blocking recommendations such as access to sexual and reproductive health services, access to emergency contraception, access to safe abortion, access to post-exposure medicine for HIV infection, and diagnosis and treatment for STIs would be a grave mistake. It is imperative that women who face sexual violence all over the world have access to these services, and Canada has a responsibility to advocate for this on the world stage.

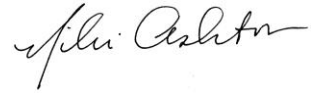
Additionally, any comprehensive resolution must include acknowledgement of the need to implement rights-based, accurate and comprehensive sexuality education programmes. These are key tools that can be used to prevent violence and promote gender equality.

We strongly urge that Canada work with state leaders and non-governmental organizations to make positive steps in addressing violence against women.

We look forward to receiving a response on this matter.



Sincerely,

Handwritten signature of Niki Ashton in black ink.

Niki Ashton, MP (Churchill)  
NDP Critic for the Status of Women

Handwritten signature of Paul Dewar in black ink.

Paul Dewar, MP (Ottawa Centre)  
NDP Critic for Foreign Affairs