

Project Shattered Dreams

Re: Immediate action required from your government to save our jobs with the RCMP until harassment lawsuits are settled

Dear Honourable Liberal Members of Parliament,

First please accept our congratulations for your party's majority win on October 20th, and specifically the Member of Parliament seat each of you won in your own ridings. It is very encouraging to see so many women take on these important leadership roles in our government. It leaves us with a renewed sense of hope for positive change in our country.

That is why we are writing to you today. We are four of the nearly 400 RCMP women who are pursuing lawsuits against the RCMP for the sexual abuse, exploitation and harassment we endured in the workplace that resulted in diagnoses of PTSD, and other conditions that left us too sick to work.

We are not part of the class action lawsuit, we have each filed our own individual lawsuits which we are personally funding.

Cpl. Catherine Galliford

Catherine has personally invested more than a quarter of a million dollars in her lawsuit that was filed in 2011, and has completed 11 excruciating discoveries for her case in which Department of Justice lawyers grilled her about her high school boyfriends and her family's personal history. She also endured no less than 3 medical exams requested by the defense team. Her trial was originally scheduled for spring 2015 but has been postponed now due to RCMP delay tactics and rescheduled for January 2017. She was forced to sell her home and move in with a family member in order to carry on with her lawsuit. Catherine is now receiving threatening letters from the RCMP who are continuing to re-victimize her and starting the process to fire her under Bill C42. Many of you are already familiar with Catherine's story as she was one of the victims who presented to the *Standing Senate Committee on National Security and Defence*. Attached is a Maclean's magazine article in which Catherine and several other female RCMP member victims of harassment were interviewed.

<http://www.macleans.ca/news/canada/harassment-bullying-continues-in-rcmp-liberal-mp/>

Civilian Member Atoya Montague

Atoya filed a Human Rights Complaint in November 2012 about all of the sexual harassment, and discrimination she endured at the hands of senior RCMP officers and by RCMP Health Services. The RCMP failed to meet any of the deadlines for that process, and the HRCC failed to stand up to them, therefore she was left with no alternative but to file a lawsuit of her own in August 2012. She had a trial date set for September 2016, but the RCMP used the same delay tactics as above to postpone it and increased the trial from 14 days to 30 days. She is waiting for a new trial date likely late 2017 or 2018. She was forced to sell her condo, and car to continue to fund her lawsuit. In 2014, Atoya gave away all her belongings and left the country, her family and friends due to threats to her personal safety.

Atoya has felt so threatened she has consulted lawyers about receiving refugee status in her new country. So far she has personally invested tens of thousands of dollars into her lawsuit. Atoya has received three letters from the RCMP, under Bill C42 advising her they are moving forward with her dismissal from the Force. Read all the letters here: <https://www.facebook.com/atoyamontague>

Click this link to watch an interview between Atoya and Wendy Mesley on CBC The National May 2015 <http://www.cbc.ca/player/Featured/News/ID/2668383737/>

Cst. Susan Gastaldo

In early 2008, Cst. Susan Gastaldo was off duty sick due to work related anxiety issues and PTSD. In 2009, while in a vulnerable position, Susan was contacted by a superior officer who pressured her to return to work immediately or lose her workplace position. Susan returned to work under these terms, directed by and reporting directly to the superior officer. The senior officer dishonestly ordered Susan back to work, against Health Services' or Management's knowledge. Susan was subsequently sexually assaulted by this superior officer and coerced into an unwanted sexual relationship. There is a great deal of evidence about this officer preying on other female members who have reported to him both historical and recent.

In 2009 Cst. Susan Gastaldo reported the sexual assault to RCMP management, and the investigation was turned over to VPD for investigation. A flawed investigation resulted in no charges, and worse, charge recommendations against Susan for Public Mischief.

In August 2011 Susan filed a civil claim as there was no further recourse within the RCMP. RCMP management then subjected Susan to an internal discipline Code of Conduct investigation and told her if she dropped her civil claim against them they would drop the internal investigation against her. Susan endured a 5 week disciplinary hearing, which ran intermittently from September 2011 to February 2012, and found her guilty of disgraceful conduct, and sanctioned 7 days pay. Upon appeal to the Commissioner of the RCMP, in June 2013, the Code of Conduct decisions against Susan were overturned due to bias ruled against the board members (3 senior RCMP officers). In September 2013, the allegations against Susan were withdrawn. Despite her efforts to return to work she was continually threatened with dismissal/medical discharge throughout this process.

Susan is currently in the process of preparing for examination of discoveries. The RCMP has spent \$ 113,066.75 to date to the DOJ for civil litigation action, and \$ 9,442.00 for legal representation of the defendant. Susan has been provided with no funding from the RCMP for her civil claim.

<http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/british-columbia/rcmp-const-gastaldo-cleared-of-misconduct-charge-stemming-from-on-duty-sex-1.2811320>

Cst. Alice Fox

CST Alice Fox was posted at the Integrated Road Safety Unit of Greater Vancouver. CST FOX thrived in this role and was the top in her field of impaired driving and apprehension in the province. In 2011, there was a management change within the unit. The new manager

harassed Cst. Fox endlessly making her work life miserable. When she discovered he was committing fraud, the harassment become so intolerable she was forced to make an internal complaint of harassment. The allegations were inclusive of incidents that occurred against the other members within the unit. Still, the RCMP chose to protect this member and allow the criminal behavior and abuse to go on. CST FOX exhausted all avenues within the RCMP internal complaint system and was left with no choice but to file a civil suit.

<http://www.cbc.ca/m/news/rcmp-sued-over-new-harassment-allegations-1.2943124>

All four of us were extremely good at our craft. We loved our work and joined the RCMP to make a difference. And we were making a difference. For example, Cst. Alice Fox was the leading impaired driving enforcement police officer in the province of British Columbia. She single handedly removed more than 1000 impaired drivers from our roadways. Imagine the impact of her no longer being able to work has had on the safety of the driving public in that province? Catherine Galiiford, Susan Gastaldo and Atoya Montague were also all top performers in their units and all four women should be in positions of leadership within the RCMP not at home suffering from a number medical conditions inflicted on them by their employer.

Since the epidemic of harassment in the RCMP came to light thanks to our brave colleague Cpl. Catherine Galliford who was the first to come forward, the Liberal party has taken a keen interest in our plight, and led committee meetings even developing a report and recommendations for change in the RCMP called **Shattered Dreams**. Senator Mitchell has also prepared and tabled new legislation for reform and civilian oversight in the RCMP. We were all so moved and felt support for the first time thanks to the extreme efforts that have been made by the Honourable MP Judy Sgro, Senator Grant Mitchell and Senator Romeo Dallaire in listening to our stories and working so diligently to attempt to make the RCMP a safer place for women. Unfortunately, these changes did not happen.

http://liberalsenateforum.ca/wp-content/uploads/2014/12/Shattered-Dreams_Final.pdf

<http://senatorgrantmitchell.ca/news/21683.aspx>

The purpose of this correspondence from us is, in part, to provide you with an update on the status of our litigation against the Force. ***More importantly, we are writing to ask your newly formed government to move forward with the proposed changes and promises made over the past 4 years to*** improve the status and treatment of women in the RCMP once and for all. We echo much of what this professor says in this article in Ottawa Life <http://www.ottawalife.com/2015/10/new-government-should-start-by-making-the-rcmp-more-accountable/>

We would also like to offer our assistance in any way possible to make those changes happen. We will lend our voices, our stories, our input, we want to be part of the the solution for making the RCMP a safe place for women to work.

By way of update we would like you to know these important facts:

- 1) ***Many of the female victims of harassment in the RCMP are now being dismissed*** before the RCMP has done anything to resolve our complaints or settle our lawsuits.

- They are making arbitrary decisions about our medical conditions without any process deeming us unfit to work ever again, despite contrary evidence from our doctors. Their solution is to fire us and take away our financial ability to pursue litigation against them instead of resolving the harassment complaints against them.
- 2) The RCMP and ***the Government of Canada continue to pay for all the legal costs of the abusers and harassers in the RCMP***, and most of these men have gone completely unpunished for their criminal behavior. Meanwhile their victims are going bankrupt, losing their homes and life savings trying to hold them to account for their actions.

Specifically, what we are asking your government to do to help us right now is:

- 1) Please put a stop to the RCMP Commissioner firing victims of harassment like Cpl. Catherine Galliford and C/M Atoya Montague before their lawsuits are settled in court.
- 2) Provide funding to the victims of harassment who have had to sue the RCMP civilly in the amount equal to what the government is spending to defend their harassers. Please level the playing field.

The RCMP has failed us in maintaining the ethics and integrity of the RCMP. The core values of the RCMP are honesty, integrity, professionalism, compassion, respect and accountability. We are not seeing any of these core values and we are holding the Government of Canada responsible. Frankly, the RCMP is completely violating the Charter of Rights and Freedoms with their actions and so far, no one has held them accountable for that. They are running the organization like a dictatorship; they use absolute, imperious and overbearing power to control their people and anyone who speaks out against their abusive ways gets punished by ostracism, isolation, bullying, threats, harassment, or as in our cases, even fired. The last government, under PM Harper, solidified this dictatorship when they passed Bill C 42 giving the Commissioner absolute authority to fire members without due process.

We have all suffered the consequences of shattered dreams, careers, health, relationships, and suffered devastating financial losses. We have also witnessed this happen to too many of our friends and colleagues to count. Some have even taken their lives because it became too much to bear. All the while we have watched while the old boys club who inflicted all this pain and suffering continues to gain favour and promotions as they continue to deny wrongdoing and vilify and further harass their victims. By denying the victims any justice and by refusing to impose consequence on the offenders, they have sent a strong message to women in the RCMP ranks: ***that RCMP management condones the sexual harassment, exploitation and abuse of women.***

How can we possibly continue to let this happen in Canada? Don't Canadians deserve better from their Federal Police Force?

We are looking for accountability and transparency. We believe it's time the RCMP starts to 'walk the walk' instead of 'talking the talk'. We are tired of the lies, the manipulation, the abuse, the burying of the truth to protect their boys club.

These issues have plagued the Force since its inception in 1974. In fact, in 1986 women

were leaving the RCMP in droves and raising the issue of systemic harassment and abuse with the government of the day and nothing was ever done.

We are asking your government to be the one that ends the abuse once and for all. Please do not ignore these serious violations to human rights happening in one of your own departments. We understand widespread 'real change' may take time to implement, but we implore you to move forward with immediate measures to help us hold the RCMP accountable for what they did to us.

In appreciation for your service and immediate action on this important issue,

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