

The Honourable Sean Fraser  
Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada  
284 Wellington Street  
Ottawa, ON K1A 0H8

Copied to: The Honourable Stephen Fuhr, Secretary of State (Defense Procurement) and  
Member of Parliament (Kelowna, British Columbia)

July 17, 2025

**Re: Justice for Bailey McCourt and the Urgent Need for Legal Reform to Prevent Femicide**

Dear Minister Fraser,

I am writing to you today in grief and urgency following the tragic femicide of Bailey McCourt, whose life was taken in the most violent, devastating and preventable way in a public space in Kelowna, B.C. in broad daylight on July 4, 2025. Her death came mere hours after her former partner, James Plover, was convicted of uttering threats and choking someone, and then allowed to walk free. Plover is now charged with second degree murder.

Bailey's death is not an isolated incident. It is part of a horrifying and ongoing pattern of intimate partner violence (IPV) that continues to escalate. Women are being killed by current or former partners at an alarming rate, and too often the warning signs—especially strangulation—are minimized or ignored. In Bailey's case, like in so many others, prior violence was present, yet the system failed to intervene in a meaningful enough way. Now two children are motherless, their grieving grandfather left to parent them, another woman who was also attacked still recovering in hospital, and a community, enraged and in mourning.

Supporting Survivors of Abuse and Brain Injury through Research (SOAR) is a registered charity and the only organization in the country with a singular focus on brain injury from IPV. We **explore** the intersection of BI and IPV, **educate** members of the public and frontline workers to recognize and respond, and **empower** survivors to get the targeted supports and services they need to thrive.

Last week, in the wake of Bailey's death, we met with Kelowna Member of Parliament Stephen Fuhr to discuss the crisis of femicide and IPV, and the countless cases of brain injury that intersect with IPV as a result of concussion and strangulation, and to share our concerns and recommendations. We left our conversation hopeful, assured that the Liberal

government is taking this seriously and will be pursuing change when the house sits again in September.

Given that, I wanted to share directly with you the key points with shared with him. We urge the Federal Government to:

1. **Recognize Femicide as a Distinct Criminal Offense:** Femicide must be named in law and carry automatic incarceration with no option for bail. Naming the crime reflects the gendered nature of this violence and creates the possibility of more accurate data collection and more targeted prevention.
2. **Expand Reverse Onus Bail Provisions:** The presumption of detention must apply in all cases where the accused has been charged with **strangulation or assault by choking**, a known and well-documented red flag for future lethal violence. Survivors should not have to live in fear while waiting for court proceedings to unfold. The burden must be on the accused to prove why they should be released—not on survivors to prove why they should be protected.
3. **Treat IPV Differently from Other Forms of Violence:** The legal system must stop treating IPV as if it were just a "domestic dispute" or a private matter. It is a public safety issue and a form of gender-based violence that requires specialized laws, trauma-informed responses, and survivor-centered approaches.

Thank you for your leadership and urgent attention to these critical reforms. I'm grateful for your time, and would welcome the opportunity to discuss this further.

Yours truly,



Karen Mason  
Co-founder and executive director  
Karen.mason@soarproject.ca