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NATIONAL DAY OF REMEMBRANCE AND ACTION ON VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

Statement by:

The Honourable Claudette Tardif

Tuesday, December 6, 2011

THE SENATE

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NATIONAL DAY OF REMEMBRANCE AND ACTION ON VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

Hon. Claudette Tardif (Deputy Leader of the Opposition):
Honourable senators, I would like to add my voice to those of my colleagues and draw the attention of the Senate to this National Day of Remembrance and Action on Violence against Women.

Established in 1991 by the Parliament of Canada, this day marks the sad anniversary of the murders of 14 young women in 1989 at l'École Polytechnique de Montréal. They died because they were women.

As well as commemorating the victims of this act of violence, December 6 provides us with an opportunity to reflect on the phenomenon of violence against women in our society and to think of the women and girls for whom violence is a daily reality.

Despite the tremendous progress that has been made in the advancement of women's rights over the past few decades, violence against women still exists in many forms.

On average, every six days a woman in Canada was killed by her spouse or ex-spouse in 2009. The same year, over 17,000 women reported to the police that they had been sexually assaulted.

Every day in 2010, some 3,000 women sought refuge in emergency shelters to escape domestic violence.

Violence against women has special significance and seriousness.

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Women are more likely to be victims of violent acts perpetrated by men they know, such as their intimate partner, a family member or an acquaintance. Violence causes physical, emotional and psychological scars that often leave its victims suffering in silence. In addition, violence limits the freedom of its victims and their participation in social and political life and thereby compromises the development of any society that tolerates it.

This day reminds us that there is a great deal more to be done to prevent and eliminate violence against women. It also provides us with an opportunity to consider tangible measures to combat the attitudes and conditions that make it possible for this violence to continue.

Therefore, I invite Canadians to participate in one of the vigils that will take place across the country today, December 6, and to share their strength in a fight that concerns us all: to put an end to violence against women in Canada and elsewhere in the world.
