Dear [Candidate Title/Name],

I have been concerned with the rise in domestic and sexual violence in our country and around the globe due to the COVID-19 pandemic. With this election, you have a unique opportunity to speak up and help us stop violence before it starts.

**As a voter in your riding**, I am asking you to fight for a plan that includes abuse prevention, prosecution and protection measures:

* **Do not classify sexual and domestic abuse prevention as a women’s issue.**
Our response must recognize male and 2SLGBTQ+ experiences of abuse and the role all Canadians can play in preventing it. The task of preventing violence must not be relegated to its most frequent victims: women.
* **Recognize and criminalize coercive and controlling behaviours.**Relationships where these tactics are used have more frequent and severe violence. Implementing the recommendations of the Standing Committee on Justice and Human Rights’ 2021 report, [*The* *Shadow Pandemic: Stopping Coercive and Controlling Behaviour in Intimate Relationships*](https://www.ourcommons.ca/DocumentViewer/en/43-2/JUST/report-9/) would empower police and our justice system to intervene.
* **Ensure funding and support is aligned with how people seek help.**
About 36 percent of spousal violence victims contact or use formal victims’ services (shelters, counsellors, crisis lines), while 68 percent talk to friends and family (*Statistics Canada, 2014*). Prevention strategies — and funding — must reflect this reality by directing support where it is most effective: community-based initiatives and informal supports.
* **Formulate a sexual exploitation action plan.**
We need to expand our definition of sexual exploitation beyond trafficking and review current legislation to help ensure the proper protection of all involuntary sex workers.

The impact of domestic and sexual abuse is felt by every Canadian family and community. We urge you to seize this opportunity to take action on their behalf by making abuse prevention a priority.

Sincerely,

[Name]