

July 21, 2025

VIA Email: Jatinder.Baidwan@gov.bc.ca

Dr. Jatinder (Taj) Baidwan, Chief Coroner
Office of the Chief Coroner
PO Box 9259, STN PROV GOVT
Victoria, BC V8W 9J4

Dear Dr. Baidwan:

Re: Requests in Response to Bailey McCourt's Femicide and IPV Epidemic

I am writing on behalf of West Coast LEAF to echo the call by Battered Women's Support Services (BWSS) urging you to exercise your discretion under s. 18(3) of the *Coroners Act* to call an inquest into the femicide of Bailey McCourt.

Ms. McCourt's estranged husband, James Plover, violently killed Ms. McCourt on July 4, 2025, the same day he was convicted of criminal charges related to choking and threatening an intimate partner. Ms. McCourt's family and friends have reported that, in the months leading up to her death, Ms. McCourt was living in fear of Mr. Plover and did not receive the help she required.¹

There is a strong public interest in holding an inquest into Ms. McCourt's death so that the public can learn about the circumstances surrounding her death, including whether the criminal and family law systems provided her with sufficient protections and support. Moreover, an inquest is necessary in these circumstances because, unlike the criminal process, it could result in systemic recommendations that prevent future intimate partner violence (IPV) femicides. We recognize that an inquest, once called, should start after the resolution of the criminal process arising from Ms. McCourt's death.

I am also writing to add West Coast LEAF's support for the Stanton Report's recommendation that your office establish a standing Gender-Based Violence Death Review Committee (GBV-DRC).² Ms. McCourt's death is not an isolated incident. IPV – and gender-based violence (GBV) more generally – is an epidemic in BC and throughout Canada.³

Ms. McCourt's femicide was one of three IPV femicides in BC that all took place during the *same week*. In 2024, the Canadian Femicide Observatory for Justice and Accountability recorded 21 femicides in BC and 187 in Canada.⁴ A GBV-DRC would have the power to

¹ Shannon Paterson, "[It's horrific': Family of murdered B.C. mom says courts didn't protect her from estranged husband](#)," CTV News (7 July 2025); Andrew Weichel, "[She was being ignored': Survivor of hammer attack that killed B.C. mom calling for change](#)," CTV News (11 July 2025).

² Dr. Kim Stanton, "[Independent Systemic Review: The British Columbia Legal System's Treatment of Intimate Partner Violence and Sexual Violence](#)" June 2025 (Stanton Report), at pp. 85-87.

³ YWCA-Metro Vancouver, [Gender-Based Violence Happens Everywhere in BC](#), online.

⁴ Canadian Femicide Observatory for Justice and Accountability, [2024 Victims](#), online.

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review GBV deaths individually or collectively, and begin a review before, during, or after a coroner's investigation or inquest. As Dr. Stanton observes:

While numerous policies, laws, and intervention programs exist in British Columbia, there remains a critical gap in how the legal system and social services analyze, respond to, and prevent gender-based fatalities. A GBV-DRC could play a pivotal role in closing this gap by systematically reviewing gender-based, interpersonal, violence-related homicides, identifying patterns and providing evidence-based recommendations for policy and legislative changes.

IPV fatalities often occur in situations where warning signs were present but not noticed or adequately addressed. Victims frequently encounter barriers when seeking protection, such as lack of legal support, inadequate police intervention, and social stigma. A structured and data-driven approach to reviewing these cases would assist in identifying risk factors and establishing systemic improvements to prevent future tragedies.

Based on the engagement undertaken as part of this Review, a broad consensus exists for the creation of a Standing GBV-DRC in British Columbia.⁵

The Chief Coroner and your office have an important role to play in how the province addresses the epidemic of IPV. However, we understand that the most recent coroner's inquest into an IPV death concluded in 2009 and the most recent Death Review Panel report on IPV deaths was published in 2016.⁶ Without a systematic and robust death review process for IPV deaths in BC, we cannot make the necessary systemic reforms that could prevent these tragic deaths from occurring in the first place.

As BC's Chief Coroner, you have an opportunity to help lead long overdue efforts to understand the circumstances of IPV deaths in our province and develop robust, whole-of government and evidence-based approaches to combatting IPV and GBV. We urge you to hold an inquest into Ms. McCourt's death and establish a standing GBV-DRC.

Yours Truly,



Raji Mangat, Executive Director

cc: Hon. Nina Krieger, Minister of Public Safety and Solicitor General
Hon. Niki Sharma, KC, Attorney General
Jennifer Blatherwick, Parliamentary Secretary for Gender Equity

⁵ Stanton Report, *supra* note 2, at pg. 87.

⁶ Coroners Service, [Inquest Archive](#), online; Coroners Service, [Death Review Panel Reports & Information](#), online.