

OTTAWA REPORT

MP's position on White Ribbon campaign misrepresented

Garth Turner
MP
Halton-Peel
Progressive Conservative



Just over two years ago, 14 women were tragically murdered at a Montreal university by a crazy anti-feminist gunman. Those deaths have turned into a rallying point for people who want violence against women to end. And rightly so.

My story today is related to that-and more. I hope it can give an insight on what being in public life today is like.

To commemorate the Montreal massacre, some men started the white ribbon campaign. A simple idea-men wearing white ribbons to signal that they oppose violence against women and will work to end it.

I was the first Conservative MP to talk about the campaign in the House of Commons. This is part of what I said:

"I do not think any caring Canadian men can condone violence against women. What is difficult for many of us to accept is the premise that all men, including those who would never lift a finger against anyone, are partially responsible for this violence.

"This is the rationale behind the white ribbon campaign. I rise today as one man in Canadian society to say that I fully accept my responsibility to try and be a part of the solution to the problem. The best result of this cam-

paign will be an increased awareness among all of us that sexism in any form-from jokes to harassment to violence itself-is unacceptable.

"It is time that the least we can do is say that we are all very sorry."

While saying that-and during the length of the white ribbon campaign-I wore a ribbon on my lapel. My statement was applauded by MPs from all three parties.

The next day I took a call from a newspaper reporter in Burlington who asked me why I refused to support the white ribbon campaign. Astonished, I asked why she would pose a question like that. And she told me that radio station CFRB had just carried a news report that Garth Turner would not support the campaign against violence against women.

I called CFRB and the newsroom confirmed they had broadcast that item. The news director said it had come from a reporter in Ottawa, and was surprised that nobody had contacted me personally. They agreed to stop broadcasting the story. They apologized, and then interviewed me in support of the white ribbon campaign. But I have no idea if that interview was ever aired.

Shortly afterwards my riding office took some angry calls from women who wondered how I could condone violence against women. One of them, despite being told the truth, went ahead and wrote this letter, which appeared last week in a local newspaper:

"As a female member of the constituency Garth Turner was elected to serve, I am shocked and appalled by his refusal to wear the white ribbon. The ribbon was meant to symbolize solidarity with women against

the rising tide of hatred and violence towards women.

"Next election, Mr. Turner will be sure to hear our voices, loud and clear."

Now, I share this with you for

two reasons.

First, I want to set the record straight, in the light of what you may have wrongly heard. Second, I'd like to remind all of us to balance the quick and negative

with the inevitable other side of the story.

Fairness has always been a Canadian trait, but in the era of the 30-second news clip, sometimes it just doesn't fit.



Local MP Garth Turner dons a White Ribbon in the legislature in support of the 'White Ribbon' cam-

paign to commemorate the Montreal massacre. (Photo submitted)

Police lay charge against Georgetown man

A Georgetown man has been charged with careless use of a firearm after he almost shot two gas station employees Dec. 10.

Halton Regional Police officers say the two male victims are employed by Ron Chalmers Esso station on Hwy 7 near 22 Sideroad.

On the day, the two were standing on trucks, filling their holding tanks

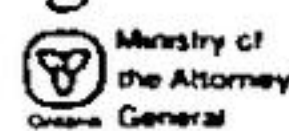
when they heard two gun shots ring out and felt several pellets fly over their heads.

They then heard the pellets hit the Chalmers building.

Police were called and the accused was found hunting in the area with a 12-gauge shot gun.

He will appear in Milton court Jan. 13.

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