



For Immediate Release
May 12, 2009

Statement from Dr. Ruby Dhalla, Member of Parliament, Brampton-Springdale

Thank you for accepting my request to speak this morning. The work that this committee is undertaking is vital to the building and growth of a nation in which there is equality, fairness and justice. In fact, fairness is what brings me here today. Fairness for those bringing forward these allegations, fairness for all foreign workers who have a right to be welcomed and treated well in our country, and fairness for anyone falsely accused of wrongdoing who like, myself, has found themselves condemned without so much as a honest airing of the facts.

I am here today to speak to you about an issue that has taken on a life of its own. An issue that has been based on innuendo and allegations, which are false and unsubstantiated because politics has been in large supply but fairness has been hard to find. Reporters have been reporting, journalists have been writing and political parties have been exploiting this in sensational ways for their own partisan purposes. You can only imagine what it's like to have been the subject of these stories. To have your character and conduct maligned without so much as an opportunity to fairly defend your name. Can you imagine how it feels to have the very values and beliefs that have defined you as a person, and that you have championed as a family put into question?

But I am here today to set the record straight to ensure that the truth is brought to light.

- 1) I Ruby Dhalla did not employ Magdelene Gordo or Richlyn Tongson. I did not sponsor Ms. Gordo or Ms. Tongson. I did not pay the salaries of Ms. Gordo and Ms. Tongson. I was not the person Ms. Gordo and Ms. Tongson provided care to. I had no involvement from an immigration or employment perspective.

My involvement: As a daughter of a mother who needed care I did what any child would do for their mother I only made the initial call to the agency after receiving the referral through a good friend. After that call both my mother and brother were in contact with the agency. I don't know why these caregivers have come forward 15 months after leaving on what my family thought was on good terms and with almost identical allegations. I don't know what their motive is or who is behind this.

So why I am here today to tell you I've done nothing wrong? Look at the allegations:

- 2) Ms. Gordo alleges she was not paid for her work however -she hand wrote a receipt in her own handwriting that she received money from Tavinder Dhalla-my mother and not me and nothing more was owed.
- 3) Ms. Gordo says she worked for 3 weeks and I held her passport for two weeks but when you look at the evidence, she herself has confirmed that she has only worked for 11 days and today. Today she changed her testimony and stated she never gave the passports to me.
- 4) It is alleged that I have had regular contact with Ms. Gordo but my boarding cards prove I was in the GTA for only 3 days in the entire time she worked for me and my calendar shows that I was busy with community and constituency events; therefore I could not have interviewed her.
- 5) They both claim they shovelled my snow but my mother has hired someone who has been shovelling her snow for the past 5 years and has never arrived in the past 5 years to have it already done.
- 6) They both claim they clean my brother's chiropractor clinic but the statement from the contractors cleaners show that my brother has a regular cleaner
- 7) Ms Tongson states I took her passport but she signed a receipt stating that she gave her passport to Neil not to me to assist her sponsorship application
- 8) In an effort to advance her immigration claim, Ms. Gordo went so far as to impersonate me, a Member of Parliament, with Human Resource Skills Development (HRSDC). HRSDC has confirmed this.
- 9) There is one final outstanding item. It has been suggested that Ms. Gordo and Ms. Tongson were in Canada illegally however I want to report that the agency providing the caregivers has confirmed that both Ms. Gordo and Ms. Tongson were in Canada legally.
- 10) After presenting this evidence it is clear that I, Ruby Dhalla am not the employer. I am not the sponsor. To that end, and to ensure my name is cleared I have personally asked the Ethics Commissioner to investigate this issue. And I will cooperate with that investigation fully.

I am the daughter of a loving, and caring single mother who was an immigrant to this country. Like these caregivers that we are talking about today my mom also came to Canada with a dream and desire to make a difference. She like many other new Canadians left behind a good life and came with hope for a better life for her children. She came to Canada without a dollar and worked to save dollar by dollar to build a good life for her family. She overcame the challenges faced by many new Canadians of learning English, looking for a job and getting used to a new way of life. She tried she struggled and persevered and raised two kids of her own. I remember growing up and watching my mother make sacrifices for our wellbeing. She taught us the virtues of honesty, integrity, respect and hard work. My mother worked in factories, she worked

as a caregiver, she worked as a child care worker, and she gave us the opportunities that have blessed our lives ever since.

Growing up in an inner city neighbourhood I learned that whether one is a CEO or janitor or teacher, everyone deserves to be treated with respect and fairness. I hear about some of the words that have been used to describe our family this week and I wish they could know the life story of my family.

I have learned about valuing people for who they are on the inside not from where they come from or what they do. That is why these allegations have gone against the grain of every value my mother has raised my brother and I with. If any one knows of the vulnerabilities faced by immigrant women it's me. I've seen it. I've lived it. I know it.

People have used the words power to describe those that are in politics and the caregivers as the vulnerable. However for me politics has never been about power but about helping those very women that spoke today that are struggling to be heard, the voiceless, and those that are powerless. It's been about the hopes and dreams of people. It is these values that have helped to shape my focuses in parliament my thoughts and ideas.

As many of you know my journey has not been easy. While all of us know that being in public life exposes us to people at many levels it is only through events such as this that you experience the extent of it. To have your home which is supposed to be your private sanctuary described in detail in public is a violation of privacy that has no words. To have your mother's health records displayed and your family's home address flashed all over the world has felt like an intrusion. I never thought the day would come in Canadian politics when my quest to break down barriers for women, for young people and immigrants would result in my own family becoming a victim.

I think all of us as Canadians must never forget that politicians are people. People are human beings with feelings and emotions. It is no small challenge to live in the public eye and to climb the steep hill that still stands before women and especially young women in politics. But it is a modest challenge compared to those that confronted my mother. And it is her example – and only her example – that I seek to live by.

While the allegations made against myself are false and unsubstantiated I do believe there are specific reforms that must be made to ensure that the live in care giver program protects both caregivers and employers. I am committed to working with this committee as well as organizations like the Canada Care Givers Association and other advocacy groups to ensure these reforms are implemented. There must be fairness for the workers. There must be fairness for employers. There must be fairness for us all. After all, that is the Canadian way.

Anyone ever entering my family home always been treated with love, care, compassion and respect. This is why the past week was difficult but I am blessed to have so many constituents, friends, and Canadians who have called me, emailed me and written to me. Please know your words of support have encouraged and given my family and me strength as we bring forward the truth and facts. As a Member of Parliament and as a daughter, as a sister and as a Canadian, I thank this committee for the opportunity to

appear. I hope we have an opportunity to work together to ensure there is fairness for care givers, and employers. Thank You

-30-

Office of Dr. Ruby Dhalla
Member of Parliament Brampton-Springdale
Candice Debi
905 874 6868