

PC minister's wife backs his viral shoveling Twitter post

Winnipeg Free Press – Wednesday, January 12, 2022

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THE wife of Manitoba cabinet minister Jon Reyes has defended him after he was mocked over a tweet that showed her shovelling snow after a 12-hour hospital shift.

In her first public comments since the photo went viral, Cynthia Reyes hit back at critics and said she was looking to decompress after working overnight amid the COVID-19 pandemic.

"I just wanted to shovel," the registered nurse wrote in a lengthy Facebook post Monday night. "Truly, my shovelling was an act of self-care and taking care of my home and family."

As she pulled into the driveway Saturday morning while everyone inside the house was asleep, she felt she had the energy to shovel snow after a "good night" at work, which hasn't always been the case amid the pandemic. It allowed her to unwind and get some fresh air in a "quiet and peaceful" place after wearing an N95 face mask for hours.

Cynthia Reyes said her husband's tweet wouldn't have gained so much attention had the gender roles been reversed or if the family wasn't under the "microscope" of politics.

"It is a reminder of how social media can blow things out of proportion and negatively affect many users," she wrote.

She said the Reyes do not take on traditional gender roles in their household.

"It's the way we roll. Jon loves cooking, and I love shovelling, and vice versa; it's really not a big deal," her post stated.

"That brings me to the fact that this tweet probably would not have gone viral if the gender roles were reversed or if my husband were not a politician."

She described her husband's tweet as "honest, genuine and sincere," while also calling on Manitobans to be kinder to each other.

"This made me realize that I am grateful that he appreciates what I do and that he loves me and shows it publicly — this is nothing new," she wrote. "I am proud that he is unapologetically

himself. So... I will not be divorcing him over shovelling as many have recommended."

Jon Reyes, the minister of economic development and jobs, tweeted the photo of his wife shovelling Saturday morning while he was standing inside the couple's home.

"Even after a 12-hour night shift at the hospital last night, my wife still has the energy to shovel the driveway," he tweeted. "God bless her and all our frontliners. Time to make her some breakfast."

The MLA was mercilessly trolled, as the tweet was picked up by online tabloids such as TMZ and the U.K.-based *Daily Mail*, newspapers including the *New York Post* and *USA Today*, the ABC talk show *The View*, and celebrities.

Oscar-winning filmmaker Taika Waititi wrote "u better pray" alongside face-palming and coffin emojis, while *Glee* actress Jane Lynch shared some of the memes that tickled her.

"The replies, people, the REPLIES," she tweeted.

Describing the weekend as a "whirlwind," Cynthia Reyes said the couple had turned down interview requests from journalists around the world.

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