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June 8, 2009

The Honourable Peter Van Loan
Minister of Public Safety
340 Laurier Avenue West
Ottawa, ON
K1A 0P9

Dear Minister:

The Canadian Resource Centre for Victims of Crime (CRCVC) is writing to you regarding the newly introduced piece of legislation that amends the *Criminal Code* to repeal the “faint hope” clause under Section 745.6 of the *Criminal Code*. As you know, this means that criminals who commit first or second-degree murder will no longer be able to apply for early parole.

This legislation is also significant because if passed, it means that unsuccessful 745 applicants would have to wait a minimum of five years before they could re-apply. The longer waiting period to re-apply after an initial rejection will bring more peace of mind to victim’s loved ones because unsuccessful applicants will be able to apply only two times: once when they become eligible at the 15-year mark of their life sentence, and once more at the 20-year mark. Currently, unsuccessful applicants may apply a total of five times: at the 15-, 17-, 19-, 21- and 23-year marks.

We feel that a similar amendment to the *Criminal Code* and *Corrections and Conditional Release Act* should follow. Victims of crime should no longer be forced to face the person who murdered their loved one in a legislated parole hearing every two years, especially where there have been no significant changes in the case. Parole reviews should take place every 5 years for lifers after reaching their parole eligibility dates.

You may be aware that I met with your predecessor on this issue, along with Ms. Terri Prioriello and Carolyn, John and Sally Gardner. During National Victims of Crime Awareness Week in 2008 Minister Day promised us his full support to make this important change.

CANADIAN RESOURCE
CENTRE FOR VICTIMS
OF CRIME



CENTRE CANADIEN DE
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VICTIMES DE CRIMES

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We hope the government will recognize the tremendous emotional burden that victims and survivors face with the prospect of a murderer’s parole hearing happening every two years. We believe making this amendment will provide families with some measure of relief, as well as putting the rights of law-abiding citizens ahead of the rights of criminals. We thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Heidi Illingworth', written in a cursive style.

Heidi Illingworth,
Executive Director

Cc Mr. Steve Sullivan, Federal Ombudsman for Victims of Crime
Ms. Terri Prioriello
Ms. Carolyn Gardner
Mr. & Mrs. John and Sally Gardner