

February 7, 2013

Thank you for inviting the Canadian Resource Centre for Victims of Crime (CRCVC) to appear before the Senate Committee on SOCIAL AFFAIRS, SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY on Bill C-316, *An Act to amend the Employment Insurance Act (incarceration)*. The CRCVC is a non-profit, non-government advocacy group working to ensure the voice of crime victims and survivors is heard and respected.

We are here to offer our support for the legislation for two main reasons. The first is for fiscal reasons. In this economic climate, it makes sense to cut costs in this area and focus government spending on the priorities of Canadians. While we agree that it is important for Canada to offer social safety nets for more vulnerable citizens, there has to be limits.

The second reason we support the legislation is about balance. Victims of crime and trauma are not offered an extension of the qualifying period for EI to 104 weeks, even though many victims cannot immediately return to work or in some cases, do not return to work at all following their victimization due to grief, anxiety, post-traumatic stress, etc. Some victims that we work with do not feel it is just for those who deliberately commit acts of violence/harm to benefit from this extension.

We also support the amendments which were made in the House of Commons:

- To ensure that individuals held in pre-trial custody but who are subsequently found innocent would not be affected by this bill.
- To have the bill come into force on a Sunday (in order to align the implementation date of the bill with the employment insurance calendar, which works in two week increments starting on a Sunday).

Thank you for your time today.

Heidi Illingworth

Executive Director