



“Dedicated to Justice” • «Au service de la justice»

May 7, 2013

Dear Mr. James Bezan, Member of Parliament for Selkirk-Interlake:

The Canadian Resource Centre for Victims of Crime (CRCVC) is a national, bilingual advocacy group for people harmed by serious crime. We provide information resources, emotional support and advocacy to hundreds of Canadians impacted by crime each year across Canada.

On behalf of our Board of Directors, I am writing to offer our support for your Private Member's Bill C-478, *"The Respecting Families of Murdered and Brutalized Persons Act."* This enactment amends the *Criminal Code* to provide that a person convicted of the abduction, sexual assault and murder of one victim is to be sentenced to imprisonment for life without eligibility for parole until the person has served a sentence of between twenty-five and forty years as determined by the presiding judge after considering the recommendation, if any, of the jury.

Working with families impacted by such atrocious crimes, we offer our support for this legislation. We feel it is fair in that it gives a judge the discretion to increase parole ineligibility from 25 up to 40 years where it is warranted in the most heinous crime situations. In the case of a jury trial, the judge will ask the jury if they wish to make a recommendation with respect to the number of years that the accused must serve before being eligible for release on parole. The judge will consider the jury recommendation when determining whether to substitute the twenty-five year period, for a number of years that is more than twenty-five but not more than forty.

Increasing the parole ineligibility period in cases where an offender has been convicted of abduction, sexual assault and murder allows a reprieve for families of the victims, who should not have to go through the agony of attending traumatic parole hearings every two years or more frequently, as is often the reality.

Sincerely,

Heidi Illingworth
Executive Director