



"Dedicated to Justice" • «Au service de la justice»

November 21, 2013

Harvey Cenaiko, Chair of Parole Board Canada
410 Laurier Avenue West
Ottawa, ON
K1A 0R1

Don Head, Commissioner of Corrections
340 Laurier Avenue West
Ottawa, ON
K1A 0P9

Dear Mr. Cenaiko and Mr. Head,

As you know, the Canadian Resource Centre for Victims of Crime (CRCVC) works to ensure the needs of survivors are met by various criminal justice agencies, with a particular focus on the federal corrections and parole system. I am writing on behalf of our Board of Directors with respect to a number of concerning cases that have recently come to our attention. We are concerned about offenders breaching their conditions of release and being returned to the community almost immediately. We are concerned about cuts to halfway house staff and community parole officers. We are concerned about the release of high-risk offenders back into the community who pose such a threat that police feel required to make a public notification. These issues, among others, are potential threats to the safety of Canadians from coast to coast.

Offenders who breach the conditions of their release should face consequences. Not being able to abide by the conditions imposed on them indicates that an offender is making poor decisions that will not lead to positive social integration. When an offender breaches his/her conditions, but they are returned immediately to the community, a message is both sent and received that conditions are not mandatory and there is no need for them to be taken seriously. Both CSC and PBC must tighten policy around breaches of conditions. We feel it indicates that an offender is no longer immediately manageable in the community. Recently, Ronald Edward Enman, 65, who is serving a life sentence for robbery, murder and a prison break, had his parole suspended for dabbling in drugs but he has been allowed to continue on day parole near Mission, BC. He was almost immediately returned to the community; they only kept him inside for a mere 30 days after they breached him. Enman was breached for all 3 of his release conditions which were to abstain from drugs, abstain from alcohol and not to be in the company of known drug users. Why is he permitted to return to the community again and again when he fails constantly and public safety is at risk?



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There have been many cut backs to parole and correctional officers, which is resulting in the increase of caseloads for those that remain. We are very concerned by reports in the media in October of this year about cutbacks at a Hamilton, Ontario halfway house, which is losing its correctional officers and is also cutting back on its parole officers and increasing the caseload of those who remain. The caseload at the York Boulevard Community Correctional Centre (CCC) will go from eight offenders per parole officer to 13. We feel that this can only negatively affect public safety, when there is not enough staff to adequately supervise offenders who are coming and going, let alone ensuring they are working toward meeting their correctional plans or abiding by the conditions of their release.

We are concerned by the case of Jayme Russell, who was granted day parole in July 2013 by the Parole Board even though BC corrections staff was opposed stating they do not believe his risk can be managed on day or full parole. The board found that he had gained insight into his criminal behaviour and risk factors and that with special conditions imposed, he could be managed if allowed out during the day.

Jerome John Morton went missing in August of this year from a Halifax halfway house. This offender was not reported missing to the public for three weeks. It is understandable that the police thought they had a lead on where to find him, but it is also unacceptable as the public's safety was at risk. He was located and arrested in September. The Parole Board placed special conditions on Morton's release, requiring him to live in a halfway house until the end of his sentence because, "Your violent victimization of persons with weapons and a careless disregard for their security calls for safe measures to ensure no further activities of a similar occur in the future."

In May 2012, convicted killer Christopher Alexander Falconer, who was on parole after being incarcerated for second-degree murder of a cab driver, was arrested for the murder of 19-year-old Amber Kirwan in New Glasgow, Nova Scotia. The failure to properly supervise this offender is unacceptable.

Cody Allen Pelletier, who was convicted of killing Justin Vasey in Surrey, BC, was returned to jail after only seven days of statutory release. It's the second time he has been released and then sent back to jail for failing to follow conditions, which include not using drugs. In October, the Parole Board of Canada revoked the 25-year-old man's statutory release after he disappeared from a halfway house in June. While awaiting his parole board hearing in jail, Pelletier attempted to assault a guard with a "shank" made from a razor blade and plastic utensil. He was convicted of carrying a weapon and



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sentenced to six more months behind bars. This man is highly volatile and a serious threat to public safety.

In the case of Patrick Rivet, even though he functioned well behind bars he had difficulty adjusting to life outside of the penitentiary. He was released to a halfway house and later granted full parole. CSC suspended his parole because he consumed alcohol and cocaine; he also admitted to hiring prostitutes while on parole.

William Bicknell is a convicted killer who was serving a life sentence for second-degree murder for the beating death of a woman from British Columbia. He escaped while on an escorted pass from Drumheller Institution in southern Alberta in March 2011. On the ride back from visiting his sister in Edmonton, he feigned a heart attack, pulled out a knife and overpowered the lone guard who was driving. At various times over the next 10 days, Bicknell held the guard and three other people hostage in their homes. We are concerned about why this offender only had one guard while out on a day pass; as this poses serious risk to the public's safety.

Larry Takahashi is a convicted sex offender known as the 'Balaclava Rapist'. He was released on a 60-day unescorted temporary absence and was living in a halfway house in Victoria. When he was released to the halfway house, Victoria Police issued a public warning about him because they believed he posed a significant risk to women and teenage girls. He was returned to custody without CSC or PBC providing reasons why. We are concerned about how it can be that the Board and CSC find the risk is manageable, yet police are so concerned they issue a public warning? We believe the police were quite justified in making this public warning, given the serious nature of the offences and potential risk to public safety. This is an offender serving 3 life sentences and he does not ever have to be released.

We will continue to monitor these concerning cases across the country and will likely access Board of Investigation Reports where they exist. We expect that PBC and CSC will do better than the examples listed above in protecting the safety of the public. We trust you agree and look forward to your response.

Sincerely,

Heidi Illingworth
Executive Director

Cc: The Honourable Peter Mackay, Minister of Justice
The Honourable Steven Blaney, Minister of Public Safety and Emergency
Preparedness