



October 28, 2015

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

The Right Honourable Justin Trudeau, P.C., M.P.
Office of the Prime Minister
80 Wellington Street
Ottawa, ON K1A 0A2

Dear Prime Minister-designate:

Congratulations on your election as the 23rd Prime Minister of Canada. We look forward to a very positive working relationship with you and your Cabinet. The Canadian Resource Centre for Victims of Crime (CRCVC) has existed since 1993 to provide a voice for victims of serious crime in the justice system. We assist persons harmed by crime and violence by providing support, information and advocacy.

We hope the Liberal Party of Canada will focus its justice and public safety portfolios on reducing crime, violence and victimization, and better serving persons harmed by crime across the country. We believe you should focus in these areas:

1. Implement a national action plan to end violence against women and children with a minimum of \$500M in funding. We believe an annual national survey on **intimate partner and sexual violence** is necessary to measure the success of action plan policies. We look forward to the public inquiry into missing and murdered Indigenous women you promised and the appointment of women to half of the Cabinet.
2. The creation of a violence reduction Board which also addresses victim assistance. We believe the government should invest \$500M a year (a fraction of the \$15 billion currently spent annually policing, court, prosecution, legal aid, correctional services and mental health review boards in Canada) to work with the Provinces/Territories and municipalities to reduce interpersonal violence through proven prevention solutions.
3. Invest \$500M annually to work with the Provinces/Territories and municipalities to develop/implement programs that meet international standards for assistance (including guaranteed supports for persons harmed; for example, access to counselling programs without waiting-lists), reparation and rights for victims of crime. We believe annual *victimization* surveys are also necessary to measure the gap between the needs and services for victims of crime.
4. Work closely with the Provinces/Territories to effectively implement the Canadian Victims Bill of Rights. We hope you will ensure the Provinces, Territories and stakeholders have the resources they need to implement the Bill. We also believe the CVBR should be strengthened. Particularly, the CVBR does not provide legal standing to victims or real redress where their rights are violated. We look forward to Provinces and Territories designating a public body to assist in the collection of restitution orders, as stated in the Bill, so that victims receive practical assistance to enforce and collect restitution across Canada.
5. Focus on implementing national standards for financial compensation and improved access to this compensation for a larger number of victims of violent crime in Canada. Across Canada, we provided only \$146 million in compensation to 19,000 applicants (78% approved) yet victim services served 460,000 victims - with only \$161 million for direct services to victims (2011/12)



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Victim Services Survey). This is too few victims receiving financial assistance (most provinces exclude victims of impaired driving from compensation even though it is the leading cause of criminal death in Canada) when we know victimization is very costly.¹

6. Replace Statutory Release with Earned Parole. It has been well documented by corrections research that the conditional releases with the highest success rates are those that rely on the judgments of professionals and are based on proper risk assessments that focus on public safety, where the lowest success rates are for those releases mandated by law, including statutory release. As well, all conditional release decisions for first- and second-degree murderers that are not made by the parole board, should be made available to victims in writing and include information about the risk assessment process. Lastly, federal corrections should provide registered victims with the reasons why an offender’s parole has been suspended when it occurs. Not knowing the reasons why an offender has been returned to custody leaves victims living with worry, stress and in fear for their safety in some cases.
7. Create a national office to respond to Canadians harmed by crime abroad including victims of terrorism and their family members. When victims return home to Canada, they require comprehensive assistance to facilitate the normalization of their lives and this is a gap that currently exists. Victims should be guaranteed all aspects of aftercare to meet their physical, emotional/psychological and financial needs.
8. Create a sentencing or law reform commission to review sentencing practices and make evidence-based recommendations to the government to provide independent advice on law to the Canadian government on such as issues as mandatory minimums, sentencing rules for homicide, etc.
9. Continue to recognize the contribution and expertise of organizations whose missions are to improve individual and collective rights of victims like the Canadian Resource Centre for Victims of Crime. We look forward to being invited to participate in government consultations and testify before various House/Senate committee meetings. We deeply appreciate funding received through two sustaining funding programs at the federal level so that we can connect with victims and empower them in their healing journeys.

We look forward to your response and future collaboration.

Sincerely,

Heidi Illingworth
Executive Director

¹ The most direct impact of crime is borne by victims. Of the total estimated costs, \$14.3 billion was incurred as a direct result of crime, for such items as medical attention, hospitalizations, lost wages, missed school days, stolen/damaged property. Specifically, productivity losses represented 47.0% of the total costs borne by victims followed by stolen/damaged property (42.9%) and health care costs (10.1%). While crime has its most significant impact on victims, others suffer as well. Family members may grieve the loss of a loved one or take time off from their daily activities to accompany victims (e.g., to court or doctor’s appointments). Source: Costs of Crime in Canada, 2008 -

http://www.justice.gc.ca/eng/rp-pr/csi-sjc/crime/rr10_5/rr10_5.pdf