



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

April 29th, 2019

Ministry of the Attorney General
11th Floor
720 Bay St.
Toronto, ON M7A 2S9
attorneygeneral@ontario.ca
caroline.mulroney@pc.ola.org

Dear Minister Caroline Mulroney,

The Canadian Resource Centre for Victims of Crime (CRCVC) is a federal charitable organization that advocates for countless victims and survivors of violent crimes across Canada. We very frequently assist victims in their dealings with the Criminal Injuries Compensation Board (CICB).

We are writing in regard to the Ontario 2019 Budget, released on April 11th, 2019. We were concerned upon learning of the cuts and eventual dissolution of the CICB and the repeal of the Compensation for Victims of Crime Act (C-24) written within in. The CICB assesses financial compensation for victims of crime and family members of deceased victims of violent crimes committed in Ontario. This vital board provides opportunities for victims to have their voices heard before a tribunal and to be considered for financial compensation. CICB provides victims an active role in advocating for their well-being, healing, and recovery, which the current Canadian adversarial criminal justice system does not allow for.

Given the seriousness of many of the crimes that these victims endure, there is often a lot of psychological injury and trauma associated with such victimization. Many victims do not seek help or support before reaching out to apply for compensation through the CICB, thus many victims apply for the “pain and suffering” award that is available. Momentarily, the maximum award is capped at the \$25, 000 mark. The current budget proposes to cut off that award at \$5, 000 which seems unfathomable given the gravity of the victimization and the urgent and long-term help these victims require, often with such treatment being extremely costly i.e. psychological counselling, with most sessions starting at \$100/session. Given their injuries, most victims tend to have very limited financial resources and this compensation is crucial to their healing.



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Additionally, the scheduled repeal of the Compensation for Victims of Crime Act (C-24) is worrisome to us, as there was no insight to what the new legislation would look like and how victim-centered it would be. Compensation for victims of crime requires an act enshrined in law to ensure future governments uphold their obligations to victims of crime under the Ontario *Victims Bill of Rights*. Victims of crime should have a right to compensation in the aftermath of a crime as their healing should be paramount. It has, in our experience, and according to many other experts within the field, been a great idea to try to get victim input for such changes, as they can provide crucial insight to what changes would be necessary and worthy, in order to provide better victim services, including victim compensation schemes.

Furthermore, we also have the following questions:

1. What will the proposed legislation to replace the Compensation for Victims of Crime Act look like?
2. How will the Victim Quick Response Program and Families of Homicide fund be impacted?
3. Moving forward, will your government be consulting victims, their advocates and the general public in regard to the decisions concerning financial compensation for victims of crime?

The CICB made many of the changes recommended in the 2007 Ontario Ombudsman report "Adding Insult to Injury". This was further seen in the 2008 McMurtry report on "Financial Assistance for Victims of Violent Crime in Ontario". Many of those recommendations continue to be relevant today, including continued financial assistance for victims of violent crime, victim advocates, performance measures, and regular review of needs and services. This may be helpful moving forward at this time as well.

We look forward to your prompt response and are available for any questions or consultation you may want or need from us.

Sincerely,

Aline Vlasceanu
Interim Executive Director

CC: Ontario Ombudsman
CC: Ontario Office for Victims of Crime