



Submission Date: February 23, 2012

To: The Senate Standing Committee on Legal and Constitutional Affairs

Re: Bill C-10 "Safe Streets and Communities Act"

Yvonne Harvey, Chair, Canadian Parents Of Murdered Children and Survivors of Homicide Victims Inc.

Good afternoon Mr. Chairman and Honourable Senators.

Thank you for giving me the opportunity to address the Committee.

My name is Yvonne Harvey. I am the Chair and co-founder of Canadian Parents Of Murdered Children and Survivors of Homicide Victims Inc. (CPOMC), which is a national, charitable organization, formed in 2009 to provide on-going emotional support, assistance and education to survivors of homicide victims.

My daughter Chrissy Nadine Predham at the age of 28 was brutally murdered in St. John's, Newfoundland in 2007. As a parent and a survivor of a homicide victim, I have learned, much to my chagrin, how widely Canada's laws need to be strengthened to protect its citizens and instil a renewed sense of confidence in public safety.

I speak to you on behalf of those victims who cannot, and on behalf of the parents and the family survivors of those victims. I am here on their behalf today in support of Bill C-10.

Bill C-10 represents a significant shift in how Canada's criminal justice system will view crime in Canada in the future. It will be a progressive step forward to improving Canada's criminal justice and correctional systems. It is a reformist step in addressing the imbalance in a judicial system where the rights and treatment of criminals trump public safety in this country. A trend that has been growing steadily since 1971, when the then Solicitor General on Penal Reform, the Hon. Jean-Pierre Goyer, made the following statement in the House of Commons,

and I quote, “.....we have decided from now on to stress the rehabilitation of individuals rather than protection of society”, end of quote.

This was a statement made in our parliament favouring the rehabilitation and rights of offenders over victims of crime and public safety. Is this statement accurate? Yes! Is it questionable? Yes! Is it unbelievable? Absolutely yes!

However, it is neither our belief nor our position to negate the importance of rehabilitation, but it is equally important to ensure that responsible consideration be part of drafting laws that impact the protection of society.

Bill C-10 is a responsible step forward, raising the bar of accountability for those who chose to commit crimes.

Canadian citizens have a fundamental expectation, and a fundamental entitlement to live in safe communities. This legislation is in line with what the majority of Canadians want. Canadians have given the government a mandate, and we look to our legislators to follow through and deliver those promises.

Opponents of Bill C-10 criticize it as a flawed piece of legislation that will be counterproductive to public safety, and will be extremely costly to Canadians.

It has been argued that punishment is not necessarily a deterrent to criminal behaviour. I would argue that while violent offenders are in prison serving their minimum sentences, they are not out in our communities committing more crimes and creating more victims.

Clifford Olsen was arrested 94 times before launching his murder spree. If the justice system had worked and he had not been released, early, there would be 11 children alive today.

Just this week I spoke with two mothers, whose children were recently murdered. Both of those victims were murdered by young offenders with a history of violence, who were out on early parole.

This new legislation will have a price tag, but so does the cost of crime. The cost of crime not only consists of taxpayers' dollars, but the loss of human life, that is immeasurable, loss of family, is immeasurable, loss of law and order, is immeasurable, and loss of faith in the criminal justice system, and in our governments to protect society, is immeasurable.

We all want safe streets and communities in which to raise our families; the benefit of that is immeasurable.

For every crime there is an offender and for every offender there is a victim, or in the case of a murdered victim, there are multiple surviving victims. In my opinion, historically we as victims of crime have been nothing more than collateral damage as perceived by the Canadian Criminal Justice System and Corrections System. Bill C-10 is a step forward in shifting that trend to one that is more balanced and inclusive.

Honourable Senators, thank you for your time.

Yvonne Harvey
Chair, CPOMC

P.O. Box 422
Carleton Place, ON
K7C 0B1

(613) 492-1978

www.cpomc.ca

admin@cpomc.ca