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News Release

Parliamentary Budget Officer Confirms: Bill C-83 Does Not Add Up

Increased Costs + Decreased Public Safety - Human Rights Protection = Bad for Canadians

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

OTTAWA, THURSDAY, APRIL 25, 2019 – Today's report of the Parliamentary Budget Officer (PBO) on Bill C-83, *An Act to amend the Corrections and Conditional Release Act and another Act*, drives home the bill's failure to increase public safety, at astronomical costs—both social and fiscal—to taxpayers.

The PBO's report compares Bill C-83's proposed "structured intervention units", the bill's rebranding of segregation, to no fewer than four more effective alternatives:

- A proposal rejected by the Correctional Service of Canada (CSC), but endorsed by the House of Commons committee that studied Bill C-83, whereby Canadian Association of Elizabeth Fry Societies representatives would intervene and assist to find alternatives in situations where women would otherwise be segregated;
- An existing but rarely used provision of the *Corrections and Conditional Release Act (CCRA)* that would allow the transfer of those with mental health issues into provincial health care systems for treatment;
- *CCRA* provisions designed to reduce the number of Indigenous prisoners and other prisoners by transferring them into the care and custody of Indigenous communities;
- Programming interventions designed to assist men to disaffiliate and terminate gang involvement, which CSC has refused to fund.

Each of these measures has been endorsed by many correctional staff as well as others working with and on behalf of prisoners. Such alternatives to segregation would not only be more cost-effective and reduce risks to public safety, they would contribute significantly to the stated objectives of Bill C-83, to eliminate the use of segregation and solitary confinement.

It currently costs on average [\\$463,000 per person per year—and for women specifically, as much as \\$600,000+ per person per year](#)—to segregate them in conditions that the Ontario Court of Appeal has found to violate the constitution: conditions that are considered cruel and unusual treatment or punishment. Bill C-83 will not only perpetuate conditions of segregation, it will raise their cost by \$58 million per year.

For women the situation is particularly abysmal. The PBO estimates the price tag of Bill C-83's structured intervention units at an additional \$7.5 million per year, over and above existing costs of segregation units of \$2.5 million per year. According to CSC reports that there are only 3 women currently in segregation, this amounts to a cost of \$3.3 million per woman per year. By contrast, the most expensive of the four alternatives costed by the PBO is one tenth of that amount. One of the alternatives carries no significant costs.

“In addition to the abundant evidence of the negative neurological, psychological and social impacts of isolation chronicled in and by the courts, this PBO cost analysis reveals why we should be actively interfering with the outrageously costly and ineffective correctional practices that will be not only perpetuated, but grievously exacerbated, by Bill-83”, stated Senator Kim Pate. “The PBO report outlines four alternatives to isolation that would achieve better results in terms of public safety, in terms of accountability, in terms of rehabilitation, and in terms of cost-effective investments for taxpayers. What more does anyone need to conclude that Bill C-83 is a colossal and dangerous waste of time and money?”

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