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Senator for Ontario | Sénatrice pour l'Ontario*

News Release

Introduction of Legislation to Reform the Criminal Record System

OTTAWA, FEBRUARY 18, 2020—This afternoon, Senator Kim Pate introduced [Bill S-214](#) in the Senate of Canada to streamline the criminal record system. By addressing delays, escalating costs, and red tape, this legislation aims to respond to the challenges that too often prevent access to jobs, housing, education and volunteer work.

Recent government and legislative work has emphasized that the current inaccessibility of criminal record relief hinders rather than supports public safety. All Canadians stand to benefit when those who have completed their sentences, have been held accountable, and are working hard to integrate into the community are able to move on from crime and contribute positively to their families and communities.

- [Former Public Safety Minister Ralph Goodale](#) identified the current \$631 fee as “punitive measure” and reiterated the need for criminal record reform as a priority [at the end of his mandate](#).
- [Parole Board of Canada](#) public consultations have demonstrated that Canadians agree and are concerned about an application process so complex that it constitutes further punishment.
- the [Standing Committee on Public Safety and National Security](#) urged the government to “review record suspension fees, and fee structure, ... the complexity of the record suspension process, ... [and] examine a mechanism to make record suspensions automatic in specific and appropriate circumstances.”
- The [Standing Senate Committee on Legal and Constitutional Affairs](#) called for action to ensure “that no one is barred from accessing criminal records relief to which they are entitled simply because they lack legal or financial resources, ... [including examining an] approach to criminal records relief that would not require an application process or fee.”

“Additional fees and requirements in recent years have reduced applications for criminal record relief [by some 40%](#). With fees set to rise again, it is imperative to act now,” said Senator Pate. “We are proposing a system that would not require an application, would cut fees, and would enhance public safety. Let’s work together to establish this better, fairer and more effective system.”

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