



"Dedicated to Justice" • «Au service de la justice»

April 9, 2010

The Honourable Vic Toews
Minister of Public Safety
340 Laurier Avenue West
Ottawa, ON K1A 0P9

Dear Minister:

We feel it is important to alert you to a recent CBC poll that asked whether the federal government should spend more on incarcerating offenders than it does on supporting victims of crime. This is in light of the fact that the federal budget estimates that project the 2010 budget for the Correctional Service of Canada to be \$2,640,200,000 (up \$193 million from 2009-2010) while federal spending on victims of crime and crime prevention initiatives are sparse in comparison.

In 2009-2010, the federal government allocated \$13 million in victim-related funding. While there appears to have been an additional \$6.6 million allocated over two years, or \$3.3 million a year "to enhance the support for victims of crime, including providing facilitated access to EI sickness benefits for eligible workers who have lost a family member as a result of crime", there have actually been cuts or minimal increases to other federal victims funding while the federal prison budget soars:

OFFICE OF THE FEDERAL OMBUDSMAN FOR VICTIMS OF CRIME
2009-2010: \$1,295,000
2010-2011: \$1,309,000 (up 1.08%)

GRANTS FOR THE VICTIMS OF CRIME INITIATIVE
2009-2010: \$850,000
2010-2011: \$500,000 (down 41.2%)

CONTRIBUTIONS FOR THE VICTIMS OF CRIME INITIATIVE
2009-2010: \$7,958,000
2010-2011: \$5,250,000 (down 34%)

While prisons are necessary to keep the public safe in some cases, we do not feel that it is fiscally accountable to spend billions on building new prisons while victims of crime continue to get little compensation or counselling (if any) to help them recover, NGO groups serving victims, like ours, get little or no federal funding (while similar offender groups get over \$1 million annually) and not nearly enough is done to prevent crime and victimization from happening in the first place in Canada.

Sincerely,

Heidi Illingworth
Executive Director