



Canadian Friends
Service Committee
(QUAKERS)

October 25, 2010

Dear

We are deeply concerned about legislation recently passed and being considered by parliament in Canada that reflects an increase in punitive responses to crime. We know these responses are expensive, and will increase the number of victims in Canada in the future. Quakers in Canada gathered in August 2010, and reached Unity in Spirit on a statement “Justice is Possible: Compassionate Response as the Foundation of Public Policy”. It outlines our concerns and offers some ideas as to how compassionate responses are well studied, under-resourced and more effective in terms of public safety. Some have described it as ‘a hopeful document’. More information about the facts in the statement is available at http://cfsc.quaker.ca/pages/resources_jails.html We are asking you to familiarize yourself with the ideas outlined in the attached statement, and consider this each time you review new justice-related legislation and policy.

- How will this proposed legislation meet the needs of those most affected by crime – the victims? Will it give them an opportunity for meaningful participation and control in a supported environment?
- How does this response help prisoners become our neighbours?
- How will the outcomes of proposed legislation or policy meaningfully, and in the long term, increase public safety, based on research?
- Will the legislation encourage good use of our limited resources?

How will you ensure your government will support and fund effective responses like restorative justice, independent victim support, supportive rehabilitation and reintegration programs and adequate mental health and addiction support? Will your proposed policies and legislation reflect a deep understanding that justice issues often reflect social concerns, like poverty, racism, health and education struggles? Please write us and tell us how you will practically respond to these concerns. We are also interested in knowing how your party justice platform integrates these ideas.

Sincerely