Canadian Friends Service Committee

E-Newsletter



Peacebuilding week at the United Nations

The United Nations held its first ever Peacebuilding Week from June 22 to 26, bringing together diplomats, civil society, and governments from around the world to reflect on peace work undertaken from local to global levels. We were privileged to attend on behalf of MCC Canada and the Canadian Friends Service Committee (CFSC) respectively, but also as co-chairs of the Canadian Peace Partners Network (CPPN). CPPN works to foster conversations around policy and create space among civil society to exchange knowledge, encourage collaboration, engage in advocacy, and enhance Canada's efforts to prevent [violent] conflict and promote peace. CPPN is navigating the government's quickly shifting priorities, which include renewed focus on military spending and investments, and reduced support for diplomacy and peacekeeping.

Keep reading this article.



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16th October 2026

Honourable Mark Carney
Prime Minister
Government of Canada
Via Email Only: pm@pm.gc.ca; mark.carney@parl.gc.ca

RE: Pass *Bill S-2* as amended to Eliminate the Second Generation Cut-Off

Dear Prime Minister Mark Carney,

Greetings from Canadian Friends Service Committee (CFSC), the peace and social justice agency of the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers) in Canada. We are writing today with deep concerns about the delay in passing *Bill S-2, An Act to Amend the Indian Act*, as amended by the Senate. The continued impact of discriminatory provisions within the *Indian Act*, specifically the second-generation cut-off rule under Section 6(2) continues the 150-year-old policy of eliminating the "Indian problem" by assimilating First Nations people into the non-Indigenous population. This policy undermines Indigenous Peoples' right to self-determination and requires legislative changes.

CFSC has long been engaged with the work of reconciliation and notes that all actions towards reconciliation efforts require the guidance of the Indigenous Peoples involved and need to be done with respect, cooperation, and ongoing consultation. Indeed, that is why CFSC strongly advocates for the full and effective implementation of the *UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples*, which, according to Canada's Truth and Reconciliation Commission, is "the framework for reconciliation" between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Peoples in Canada.

We sincerely hope you will listen to many Indigenous nations, the Standing Senate Committee on Indigenous Peoples, and the Senate of Canada and pass Bill S-2 as amended to eliminate the second-generation cut-off, without further delay.

We support the calls to action of the recent recommendations made by the United Nations Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women, the UN Human Rights Committee and the UN Expert Mechanism on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, which call for an immediate end to the second-generation cut-off.

Canada's consultative process can and should continue on how to support Indigenous communities in welcoming new members; not on *whether* to continue a policy of sex- and race-based discrimination. It is our understanding that many years of consultation have already been conducted. Articles 8, 9, and 33 of the *UN Declaration*—state:

> *Article 8*
> 1. Indigenous peoples and individuals have the right not to be subjected to forced assimilation or destruction of their culture.
> 2. States shall provide effective mechanisms for prevention of, and redress for:
>
> (a) Any action which has the aim or effect of depriving them of their integrity as distinct peoples, or of their cultural values or ethnic identities;

Open letters to government

The second-generation cut-off is a rule in Canada's out-dated "Indian Act" that has meant many Indigenous people have lost status and connection to their communities. A change that would fix this has already been the determined after many years of consultation with Indigenous Peoples. UN bodies have made recommendations to encourage this change. And the Bill that would make it happen is simply sitting in the Senate. CFSC has written to the government to encourage that this move forward without further delays.
https://QuakerService.ca/End2ndGenerationCutOff

We were invited to make a submission to Global Affairs Canada's foreign policy review. We focused on nonviolent peacebuilding efforts, diplomacy, development assistance and more.
https://QuakerService.ca/ForeignPolicyReviewSubmission

Two police associations, later echoed by the government of Ontario, have called for Canada to toughen its parole laws. The Canadian parole system is already profoundly punitive, creating an uphill battle for people who are working hard to gain release and rebuild their lives post-incarceration. We joined a growing number of voices expressing deep concerned that Parliament is quickly advancing changes without making time for scrutiny, and in the absence of any evidence that such supposedly “tough on crime” agendas work to improve safety. There is ample evidence that these changes have just the opposite impact (see our handout on parole below).
https://QuakerService.ca/ParoleLetterPDF



We're hiring

We're hiring a part-time Administrative Assistant. This is a new entry-level position based in our Toronto office. The deadline to apply is November 10th. Find out more at **https://QuakerService.ca/Jobs**



PAROLE AND ITS ROLE IN REHABILITATION AND COMMUNITY SAFETY

Sentencing rarely repairs harm

Sometimes people behave in harmful ways. When people are found guilty of criminally harmful behaviour, a sentence is imposed. In principle, the objective of sentencing in Canada is to:

- Deter further harm and separate the person found guilty from society, where necessary;
- Provide reparations and promote responsibility for harm done;
- Denounce unlawful conduct; and
- Assist in rehabilitation of the person found guilty.

In reality, sentencing rarely repairs the harm caused to the persons or communities affected, and accountability to families and communities is taken away. Meanwhile, the focus on punishment commits most of the justice system's resources to legal processing, incarceration and prisons, rather than healing and rehabilitation.

Despite these problems, one of the more promising parts of the current justice system is parole.

What is parole?

Parole is a graduated, supervised return to the community of an incarcerated person before the expiration of their sentence. The purpose of parole is to support community safety and the rehabilitation and reintegration of incarcerated persons into society.

Parole comes in two forms. In day parole, the person abides by a curfew and specific conditions, and resides in a federally approved halfway house in the community. With full parole, while there is no daily curfew, they must abide by specific conditions, report regularly, and live in an approved residence of choice.

How does parole work?

The parole process begins with escorted passes from prison to attend, for example, religious services or support groups. These escorted absences then progress to unescorted passes, followed by limited release to a halfway house with ongoing supervision and support. Many do not ask for passes, or are turned down, and their first experience is day parole. Many day parole requests are also turned down.

Reintegration plans are created with input from prison staff, Indigenous Elders (if needed), families, volunteers, parole officers, psychologists, halfway houses, community support agencies, and the individual. Individuals work toward full parole, where they are able to live in the community with supervision, support and monitoring.

How does parole keep us safe?

Most incarcerated persons become our neighbours and friends after serving their time. Evidence shows that people leaving prison have a better chance of success if they receive supervision, opportunities, training, and support within the community. Without parole, they would be released on their Warrant Expiry Date without any supervision or community supports making them far more likely to reoffend.

Ideally, parole provides treatment with dignity, continued assessment of risk, encouragement toward a law-abiding lifestyle, assistance in returning to community life, and access to programs that will help with re-entry into society.

In 2014-2015, the Parole Board of Canada reported that 99.1% of federal day parole and 97.3% of federal full parole supervision periods were completed without reoffending.[1]

1 Parole Board of Canada. 2016. *Performance Monitoring Report 2014-2015*. https://www.canada.ca/content/dam/canada/parole-board/migration/005/009/093/005009-3000-2015-en.pdf

Featured resource: *Parole and its role in rehabilitation and community safety*

What is parole? How does parole keep us safe? Our double-sided handout (PDF) has all the answers!