



*St. Leonard's Society of Canada | Société St-Léonard du Canada*

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**\*\*FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE\*\***

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NEWS RELEASE

St. Leonard's Society of Canada (SLSC) would like to address media coverage over the past month pertaining to correctional practices in Canada. On September 5, 2018 The Honourable Ralph Goodale, P.C., M.P., Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness shared his Mandate Letter to Anne Kelly, Commissioner of Correctional Service of Canada.

SLSC is encouraged by the Mandate Letter to Commissioner Kelly, particularly those messages which reinforce that CSC must ensure the protection of Canadian communities through appropriate custodial measures, effective rehabilitation and safe reintegration of people serving a Federal sentence. Further, the Mandate Letter notes that "it is critical to continually ensure that CSC's rehabilitative programming is demonstrably effective, with both internal and external analysis and research to back it up." This statement refers to all people who have experienced incarceration, as SLSC agrees it should.

Since early last week, the correctional system and Parliament has been challenged on practices pertaining to rehabilitation (i.e. healing lodges) and graduated release – both well-established principles and practices in an evidence-based approach to reasonable, safe, secure, and humane corrections.

SLSC recognizes the direct and indirect harm caused to victims of crime by people who commit an offence, as well as collateral harm to victims' families, loved ones and communities. We support a balanced policy that seeks to reduce harm caused by criminal victimization and, which seeks safe, humane and timely community integration of those who are eligible through the use of evidence-informed supports.

Balance is a fundamental cornerstone of Canada's criminal justice system; and, as such it is critical that criminal justice policy is not subject to rapid, 'knee-jerk' responses that will have lasting impact across system and compromise the integrity of our responsibility towards people who are in conflict with the law. The role of the government is to ensure that strategic priorities and sound policies are in place for the justice system as a whole; however, it is the responsibility of the correctional system to oversee individual case management of the people in its care and custody.

The reality is the vast majority of people who are incarcerated come from increasingly diverse populations and will eventually return to their communities. As such, options for risk-reduction and rehabilitation that foster a traditional healing environment supportive of reintegration are essential in the administration of corrections. SLSC supports and encourages evidence-informed practices such as graduated release for those who are deemed to be ready, as an approach that improves community safety and contribute to humane, and effective corrections.

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