

For Immediate Release

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Report: over half of those behind bars in Canada's provincial jails have not been convicted or sentenced. It's time to fix our broken bail system.

Ottawa—Today, the Canadian Civil Liberties Association (CCLA) released a comprehensive study calling attention to Canada's broken bail system. Its findings call into question Canada's commitment to the presumption of innocence as thousands are needlessly detained prior to trials. Over half of those currently behind bars in our provinces have not been convicted or sentenced.

The John Howard Society of Canada is committed to strengthening the presumption of innocence as part of its five-point plan to improve Canada's corrections system. As a result, we join the CCLA in recommending desperately needed fixes to the broken bail system.

"Today's CCLA report shows that Canada's bail system is broken and in desperate need of repair," said **Catherine Latimer**, Executive Director of the John Howard Society of Canada. "We join the CCLA in calling for the implementation of specific recommendations found in the *Set up to fail* report to restore the presumption of innocence. Further, we are calling for a reduction in the over-reliance of expensive pre-trial detention and improvements of confinement conditions in remand facilities."

Specifically, the CCLA report recommendations include: improving the efficiency of the bail process; dropping sureties in the few jurisdictions requiring them; ensuring conditions on release are relevant, limited, and achievable; limiting custodial responses for breaches of conditions; improving conditions of confinement in remand centres.

"Some provinces have greater scope for improvement than others and we are committed to working with interested parties to support the implementation of CCLA Report recommendations," Latimer said.

The John Howard Society of Canada is a national non-profit organization working to make Canada's corrections system more effective, just, and humane. The John Howard Society of Canada's 5-point plan to improve the corrections system focuses on:

- Respecting the presumption of innocence
- Suing for peace in the war on drugs
- Treating rather than punishing the mentally ill and brain injured
- Pursuing proportionate and constructive penalties for crimes
- Transforming corrections to emphasize contribution.



Catherine Latimer is available for comment on the Canadian Civil Liberties Association's *Set up to fail* report.

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Catherine Latimer is Executive Director of the John Howard Society of Canada. She is formerly Director General of Youth Justice and Strategic Initiatives and Law Reform at the Department of Justice. She was responsible for the development and implementation of the Youth Criminal Justice Act.