

John Howard

THE JOHN HOWARD SOCIETY OF CANADA
LA SOCIÉTÉ JOHN HOWARD DU CANADA

August 2025

Dear Donor,

Thank you for your ongoing and generous support of the John Howard Society of Canada as we strive to promote **effective, just and humane responses to crime and its causes**. At the moment, public attention is understandably focused on trade and its implications for Canadians. The Prime Minister has indicated that we need to spend less to invest more. All federal departments have been asked to propose significant spending reductions. Those cuts could have a devastating impact on an already beleaguered criminal justice system.

As we mark **Prisoners Justice Day on August 10th**, we see correctional systems that are far from just. Levels of inactivity, delays, and violence are far higher than they should be. Mental and physical health needs are not being adequately addressed. Recommendations to improve the system from Senators, the Correctional Investigator, coroner's inquests, Implementation Advisory Panel and the Auditor General are not being implemented. Even Parliament is ignoring its statutory duty for a comprehensive review of the new Structured Intervention Units that was required to begin in 2023.

While further cuts in spending could be devastating, we are encouraging the federal government to be bold in its thinking about cuts and investments. Prisoners are an untapped source of labour when we need to be building our nation. It is heartening to see CorCan, a program that provides employment experience to some prisoners, participating in building needed housing. There are many more prisoners who would willingly participate in such programs.

Other countries have successfully used prisoner-involved co-operatives to meet needs. **This would have both correctional and economic benefits at a time when we need both.** Further, community-based corrections organizations, like the John Howard Societies, could be mandated to deliver rehabilitative and reintegration plans and programs **efficiently and effectively**. This would improve access to the programs that are delayed and often unavailable in the prisons. There are other smart alternatives to save funds that would promote community safety.

The most significant promised legislative reform this fall relates to bail. The focus on toughening bail that is being driven by the premiers and the police obscures the dysfunction of the broader system. One of our priorities is to raise awareness about bail reform and to dispel

the misinformation. The Charter of Rights and Freedoms guarantees the right for all to be presumed innocent and to not be denied reasonable bail.

Did you know that 46% of all Canada's total prisoners are being held in pretrial detention?

What does this mean? It means that those prisoners who are remanded have not yet been convicted of a crime, are denied their ability to remain in the community until a trial is held. This can take years. In the meantime, those prisoners have likely lost their housing, jobs, connections in the community and are spending all of their time in an environment that can be disruptive, dangerous and damaging to both their physical and mental health. The issue of detaining someone pre-trial has grown so steadily that now **the majority of prisoners in our provincial prisons have not been found guilty or sentenced**. This proportion of prisoners held in detention is far higher in Canada compared to other progressive countries.

The John Howard Society of Canada, with your help, **supports a comprehensive, evidenced-based and principled reform** to the laws, policies and practices that are associated with pre-trial detention. Supporters like you give us hope and encouragement that there are other like minded Canadians who want to improve pre-trial detention conditions, respect the presumption of innocence and ensure measures are taken to maintain public safety.

As you can see, times are busy but hopeful for us at The John Howard Society of Canada. There is much work to do, and we appreciate all of the support that you offer – whether one time, or through monthly donations – you help make our work possible.

Enjoy the rest of the summer. Stay cool and stay safe.

Sincerely,



Catherine Latimer
Executive Director

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