

JOHN HOWARD SOCIETY

RESOLUTION REGARDING BAIL REFORM

Whereas the John Howard Society is committed to effective, just and humane corrections and to promoting safety in our communities;

Whereas the Charter of Rights and Freedoms guarantees the right to be presumed innocent and to not be denied reasonable bail;

Whereas the use of pre-trial detention has grown steadily such that the majority of prisoners in our provincial prisons have not been found guilty or sentenced

Whereas the rate of 46% of all Canada's total prisoners being held in pretrial detention without conviction or sentencing is far higher than rates in other progressive countries;

Whereas people are disproportionately represented in pretrial detention based on race, culture, gender, mental health, and wealth;

Whereas placements in pretrial detention are disruptive, dangerous, and damaging to physical and mental health and prosocial outcomes;

Whereas efficient and effective bail alternative programs are not adequately available or resourced to provide support or services; and

Whereas, despite the growing rates of pretrial detention, there are continuing calls to restrict access to bail;

Be it therefore resolved that the John Howard Society support comprehensive, evidence-based, principled reforms to the laws, policies and practices associated with pretrial detention and release and specifically that:

- (a) it advocate for a necessary comprehensive, evidence-based, and principled overhaul of the bail system;
- (b) it promote and promulgate the evidence relating to the current system including alternative programs; and
- (c) it develop proposed principles and reforms to the laws, policies, and practices that would improve Canada's bail system