



"Dedicated to Justice" • «Au service de la justice»

November 9, 2016

The Honourable Ralph Goodale, P.C., M.P.
Minister of Public Safety
House of Commons
Ottawa, ON K1A 0A6

Dear Minister:

The Canadian Resource Centre for Victims of Crime (CRCVC) is a national agency that serves victims and survivors of crime committed by federal offenders. We believe that victims of crime must be at the centre of work done in federal corrections and conditional release. We are writing to suggest that current regional Victim Advisory Committees (VAC) be reformed into a national advisory committee with a legislated mandate similar to Citizen Advisory Committees (CACs).

We believe a national VAC should report directly to the heads of CSC and PBC and the role of members would be to observe, liaise, and advise. This would ensure a clear direction and objectives, and abolish the disjointed operations of having VACs existing in each region with no true ability to affect change. By having one central advisory committee with appropriate representation from the regions and a mandate to work directly with the agency heads, both policy and services for victims would be improved.

We suggest that responsibilities/objectives of membership include:

- Regular engagement with CSC/PBC as observers of processes affecting victims and as such, can help assess if victims are getting adequate services. They can also ensure that CSC/PBC is operating under the *Corrections and Conditional Release Act*.
- Offer a victim/victim services viewpoint on the impact of CSC/PBC policies, programs and services. The members can also help raise public awareness of victims' rights in federal corrections and parole.
- Provide advice to CSC/PBC on its policies, programs and services, while also visiting facilities/regional offices regularly to meet PBC/CSC officials and staff.

Finally, we suggest that a national VAC be composed of community-based victim services staff and survivors/advocates who understand the federal corrections and conditional release system more broadly than their own case, and can provide a plethora of valuable perspectives and expertise. We believe it is time for the *Corrections and Conditional Release Act* to be amended to require in law that CSC/PBC consult victims/their advocates.

Sincerely,

Heidi Illingworth
Executive Director

Cc Sue O'Sullivan, Office of the Federal Ombudsman for Victims of Crime