

OTTAWA REPORT

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Ending automatic early release for repeat violent offenders

Prime Minister Harper has announced that the Government of Canada will introduce legislation to end the practice of automatic early release for repeat violent criminals. Currently under the Corrections and Conditional Release Act (CCRA), federal offenders serving fixed-term sentences are allowed to serve the final third of their sentence in the community under supervision and subject to conditions.

The Government has determined that this is the wrong approach when it comes to repeat violent offenders. Under the proposed legislation, repeat violent offenders will no longer be granted statutory release after serving two-thirds of their sentence. These changes complement other tough on crime actions introduced by our Government, including:

- ? Tougher prison sentences for sexual offences against children, serious gun crimes, impaired driving, and selling drugs to children;
- ? Providing the courts with the discretion to end sentence discounts for multiple murders; and
- ? Repealing the Faint Hope Clause which allowed offenders serving a life sentence with a parole ineligibility period of more than 15 years to apply for parole after serving 15 years in prison.

It's Tax Season!

With tax season underway, the new Family Tax Plan will see money returned to the pockets of Canadian families where it belongs. The Family Tax Cut will provide families with an average tax savings and benefits of \$1,140 starting in the 2014 tax year. Low and middle-income families will receive two-thirds of the overall benefits provided by the package.

As of January 1, parents will receive a benefit of \$160 per month for each child under the age of six ? up from \$100 per month. Parents will also receive a benefit of \$60 per month for children aged six through 17 with the first payment scheduled to be issued in July 2015.

The child care expense deduction dollar limit has increased by \$1,000 for the 2015 tax year and the amount of eligible expenses that can be claimed for the Children's Fitness Tax Credit for 2014 has been doubled to \$1,000. Like the Children's Fitness Tax Credit, the Children's Art Tax Credit is available for a wide range supervised activities. You can claim up to \$500 of the fees you paid in 2014 for registration or membership in arts and crafts programs, music lessons, drama camps, and more.

Not only has the Government lowered taxes, we are also making it easier to file your taxes. Four in five Canadians are now experiencing the ease of filing online. Many are receiving their tax refund in as little as 8 days when using direct deposit. The Canada Revenue Agency's online services allow taxpayers to; file their return, track their refund, make a payment, receive their notice of assessment or reassessment, change their personal information, and sign up to have their refund deposited directly into their bank account. For more information on CRA's online services, go to www.cra.gc.ca/electronicsservices.

Working in Partnership to End Violence against Women and Girls

Violence against women and girls takes a terrible toll on individuals, families and communities. That's why our Government is taking action to end gender-based violence and to improve support for victims. In keeping with this commitment, we have launched a new national Call for Proposals entitled Working in Partnership to End Violence against Women and Girls. Through this call, we will provide funding to organizations across Canada for projects that foster partnerships within and among communities to prevent violence against women and girls, and create positive change that prevents violence. Applications for funding are accepted online and the deadline for submissions is April 17, 2015.

Since 2007, the Government of Canada has provided more than \$153 million through the Women's Program at Status of Women Canada for community-based projects. Of this amount \$71 million has gone to projects that prevent violence against women and girls.

Nominations open: 2015 Early Childhood Education Awards

The Prime Minister's Awards for Excellence in Early Childhood Education honour outstanding and innovative early childhood

educators who excel at fostering the early development and socialization of the children in their care, and at helping build the foundation children need to make the best possible start in life. Nominations for the 2015 Awards are now open, and will be accepted until April 30, 2015. Awards are offered at the regional and national levels and carry cash prizes of \$1,000 and \$5,000 respectively. For more information visit pma.gc.ca.

If you would like to contact me on any issue, please call 905-953-7515 or visit my website at www.loisbrown.ca. I look forward to hearing from you.