

Conservatives staying tough on crime

I am very happy to see there has been some welcomed news on the state of the Canadian economy lately.

As important as the economy is to Canadians, the Conservative government continues to maintain a secondary focus on law and order. We are the only party in the House of Commons serious about getting tough on crime.



Patrick Brown
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A prime example is the Truth in Sentencing Act (Bill C-25). Our government was dead set against the practice of judges granting two-for-one or three-for-one credit to criminals for time served before or during their trial.

Once these criminals were duly convicted in a court of law, their sentences were automatically reduced by this 'extra' time.

We introduced legislation to put the credit ratio back to one-for-one and it passed in the House. Bill C-25 received support from provincial and territorial governments, victims' associations and police forces from across the country during the legislative process.

The new law strictly caps the amount of credit granted for time served in custody prior to conviction and sentencing back where it should have been all along; one-for-one. Judges may allow a 1.5-for-one credit, but only in extraordinary cases and the court must fully explain the circumstances. Criminals who previously skipped bail or had a court of law, their sentences were automatically reduced by this 'extra' time.

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Our government also announced last month the introduction of amendments to the young offenders legislation to strengthen its handling of violent and repeat young offenders.

We propose to simplify the rules to keep violent and repeat young offenders off the streets while awaiting trial. These changes would require the Crown to consider seeking adult sentences for youth convicted of the most serious crimes — murder, attempted murder, manslaughter and aggravated assault.

The Crown would also be required to inform the court if it chooses not to apply for an adult sentence, thereby enabling the courts to impose more appropriate sentences on other violent and repeat offenders.

The provinces and territories will still have the discretion to set the age to consider adult sentences for youth convicted of the most serious crimes. The amendments would also ensure that offenders under the age of 18 who are sentenced to custody will be placed in youth facilities only, even if they receive an adult sentence.

Our government continues to work on legislation to overhaul the Corrections and Conditional Release Act (accelerated parole review). I do not believe that convicts should be released after only serving one-sixth of their sentences.

I also am disgusted by media reports of convicted serial killer Clifford Olson collecting old age security and the guaranteed income supplement while serving multiple-life sentences for his heinous crimes.

I assure you that we are looking into this matter to see what options are available to correct this situation, and to prevent this from ever happening again.

I support all these measures to keep our streets safer, believe it is the fair approach to take and I am confident that most Canadians agree.

Patrick Brown is MP for Barrie