

Backgrounder

Right to Information

Building on existing federal and provincial laws and policies, the *Canadian Victims Bill of Rights* would enshrine a victim's right to receive, on request, general information about:

- The criminal justice system and the role of victims;
- Available victim services and programs, including restorative justice programs; and,
- His or her right to make a complaint if his or her rights have been infringed.

Building on existing federal, provincial and territorial laws and policies, a victim would also have access to case-specific information on request, such as:

- The status and outcome of the investigation;
- Scheduling, progress and the final outcome of criminal proceedings;
- Any review of an offender's conditional release, and the timing of conditions of that release; and,
- Information about an accused who has been found unfit to stand trial or not criminally responsible on account of mental disorder while that person is under the jurisdiction of a court or a Review Board.

Proposed *Criminal Code* amendments to accompany the *Canadian Victims Bill of Rights* would require the court to ask the Crown if reasonable steps were taken to inform the victim of a plea agreement for murder or serious personal injury offences, or to make the same provision on request for an offence where imprisonment of five years or more is possible. *Criminal Code* amendments would also allow a victim to request copies of bail, conditional sentence and/or probation orders.

The proposed *Corrections and Conditional Release Act* (CCRA) amendments to increase victim access to information about the person who harmed them would:

- Permit a registered victim to access information about the status of the offender, and the offender's progress against his or her correctional plan;
- Permit a registered victim to be informed when a federal offender has been removed from Canada prior to the end of a sentence;
- Require disclosure of an offender's release date, destination and conditions to the victim unless the disclosure would have a negative impact on public safety;
- Automatically provide a registered victim with copies of Parole Board of Canada decisions; and,
- Require that Correctional Service Canada inform a registered victim about victim-offender mediation services.

Correctional Service Canada and the Parole Board of Canada will also modernize service delivery to victims by allowing registered victims to access the information available to them under the CCRA, including a photo of the offender, through a secure web-portal.

