

Backgrounder

Right to Participation

The *Canadian Victims Bill of Rights* would give victims the right to convey their views about decisions to be made by criminal justice professionals at various stages of the justice system and have them considered, and to present a victim impact statement. Proposed amendments to the *Criminal Code* would:

- Require that judges include in the record of bail proceedings that they have taken into consideration victim safety and security in their decision;
- Add the acknowledgement of harm done to victims and the community to the sentencing objectives;
- Provide for a standard Victim Impact Statement and Community Impact Statement form to ensure consistency in how victims indicate the physical or emotional harm, property damage or economic loss suffered by the victim. This form could also be used by Review Boards to guide their decision-making in the case of an accused found not criminally responsible on account of mental disorder; and,
- Enhance victim participation at sentencing by allowing a victim's representative to bring a photograph of the victim to court when presenting their victim impact statement, and to have a support person close to the individual while presenting their victim impact statement.

Proposed changes to the *Corrections and Conditional Release Act* would permit victims who are unable to attend a parole hearing to listen to an audio recording of the hearing, and would allow the victim to designate a representative to receive information on their behalf. Changes would also allow victims to waive their right to information from Correctional Service Canada and the Parole Board of Canada.