

David Tilson MP ? Government conducting consultations on Canadian Victims Bill of Rights

Canadians are often reminded of horrific crimes, and the dreadful outcomes that can result from them, whether through the news, social media or in their very own communities.

The recent epidemic of teen suicides following online bullying is just one example. While Canada is regarded as one of the best countries in which to live, work and raise a family, there's always more that can be done. Once and for all, the rights of victims need to be held above the rights of criminals.

Our government is committed to keeping our streets and communities safe. Indeed, our government has a strong track record of taking real action for victims, including establishing the Office of the Federal Ombudsman for Victims of Crime, creating the Federal Victims Strategy, and eliminating the faint-hope clause, which prevents convicted murderers from applying for early parole. There is clearly still more to be done. This is why we are working to bring forward legislation to implement a Victims Bill of Rights. This bill will further enhance our government's commitment to victims of crime by entrenching their rights into a single law at the federal level.

In late April, our government launched consultations with victims of crime, victim advocates, and victim-serving organizations to discuss key priorities for the Canadian Victims Bill of Rights. This is in keeping with our government's plan for safe streets and communities, one of four priorities identified by Prime Minister Stephen Harper. The plan includes tackling crime, victims' rights, and fair and efficient justice.

"These consultations offer a meaningful opportunity to provide input on how the criminal justice system should respond to victims," Public Safety Minister Vic Toews said.

Online consultations will be open to the public, starting May 1 and run to June 30. Anyone who is interested in participating is urged to visit the Department of Justice's website, at www.justice.gc.ca, for more information.

"Our government is committed to keeping our streets and communities safe," Minister Toews said. "We are taking concrete action to ensure the voices of victims of crime are heard and that offenders are held accountable for their actions."

