

Ottawa Journal by David Tilson MP ? Liberal government failing to make necessary judicial appointments

We all understand that in order to have a well-functioning justice system, which serves Canadians in a fair and timely manner, judges are a necessity.

Sadly, here in Canada at present, an increasing number of judicial vacancies have added to a significant number of serious criminal cases being thrown out of court. This is most concerning, especially when it's an issue that could be addressed by the current Liberal government, but isn't, leaving serious offenders to walk free and victims without justice.

There are 60 vacancies for federally appointed judges across Canada at this time. Since the Supreme Court of Canada's 2016 ruling in *R. v. Jordan*, lawyers have sought to suspend more than 800 criminal cases on the basis of unreasonable delay. This includes more than a dozen murder, attempted murder and manslaughter cases. *R. v. Jordan* established reasonable time limits for trials to be completed. Cases which exceed 18 months in provincial court ? or 30 months in Superior Court ? are deemed presumptively unreasonable and the charges must be stayed unless the Crown can prove the delays were caused by unforeseen or unavoidable circumstances. However, despite this ruling, the current Liberal government continues to fail to act on filling judicial vacancies. The current Liberal government only appointed 34 Superior Court judges in its first year in power. Our previous Conservative government, in stark contrast, made 96 appointments to the Superior Court in the previous year (source: Library of Parliament). Our previous Conservative government also placed victims at the heart of the justice system. This means ensuring criminal cases are heard in court and not thrown out because of court delays, due to the government's failure to keep up with the demand of judicial appointments, which is exactly what's occurring with the current Liberal government. The current government's inaction to fill judicial vacancies is unacceptable and is, ultimately, allowing murderers and other violent offenders to go unpunished.

Based on the current Liberal government's failure to fill judicial vacancies, it would unfortunately appear that they are more interested in making excuses for criminals than providing justice for victims of crime. Moreover, the Canadian Bar Association has asked the Justice Minister to urgently address the situation since court delays are considerably undermining Canadians' confidence in our justice system.

It's time for the Justice Minister to act by filling the judicial vacancies and end unnecessary miscarriages of justice. Victims of crime deserve better, as does our justice system.

