



Submission to the House of Commons
Standing Committee on Justice and Human Rights
regarding

Bill C-59, An Act to amend the Corrections and Conditional
Release Act (accelerated parole review) and to make
consequential amendments to other Acts

(Abolition of Early Parole Act)

40th Parliament, 3rd Session

February 15, 2011

Mission Statement of the John Howard Society of Canada:

“Effective, just and humane responses to the causes and consequences of crime.”

*Ed McIsaac,
Interim Director of Policy
The John Howard Society of Canada
809 Blackburn Mews,
Kingston, ON K7P 2N6
Phone: 613-384-6272
edmcisaac@gmail.com*

Opening Statement, February 15, 2011

I thank the committee on behalf of the John Howard Society of Canada for the opportunity to appear with respect to Bill C-59.

The John Howard Society, for those of you who do not know, is a non-profit organization whose mission is the promotion of effective, just, humane responses to the causes and consequences of crime. The society has 65 front-line offices across the country delivering programs and services to support the safe reintegration of offenders into our respective communities.

The John Howard Society does not support the abolition of accelerated parole review. I have left with the clerk a copy of our position paper on presumptive gradual release, which I hope will be of assistance to the committee during their review of this legislation.

The protection of society is best served through the timely supervised reintegration of offenders back into our communities, not through the extension of periods of incarceration. The provisions of APR were introduced to assist the timely conditional release of first-time non-violent federal offenders. The available data indicates that approximately 900 offenders a year benefit from this timely supervised release and that over 80% successfully complete their period of supervision in the community.

In terms of public safety, it appears counterproductive to be contemplating the abolition of conditional release provisions that have assisted in the timely release of so many offenders. It as well appears counterproductive, with a penitentiary system that is overcrowded, to be taking a decision that will significantly increase the prison population and further limit access to correctional programming.

I urge the committee, through its deliberations, to consider the impact of abolishing accelerated parole review--the impact on both first-time non-violent federal offenders as well as the correctional process as a whole.

I thank you for your time. I look forward to your questions.