

## **LIBERAL BILL WOULD ADDRESS CONCURRENT SENTENCING FOR SERIOUS CRIMES.**

In my last editorial, I had mentioned the Surrey strategy on crime reduction that Mayor Dianne Watts had been instrumental in implementing. It bears a repeated mention this week in light of the mayor's recent visit to Ottawa. Though it was clearly an important and timely visit in light of the recent shooting tragedy, it was more importantly an opportunity for her and I to speak about an initiative she is championing, which I would like to underline has my full support.

I am on the same page with the mayor on tougher sentencing, especially for firearms offences and drug trafficking, and we absolutely need federal funding for anti-gang police resources, drug gang education and prevention programs. And I support the city's focus on the root causes of crime such as poverty, border security and the prolific drug trade. There is also a key issue, spearheaded by a caucus colleague of mine, which must be addressed, and that is consecutive sentencing for those who commit multiple homicides.

In my opinion, this is a signal piece of legislation that could go a long way in addressing a root issue in tragedies like we recently suffered in our community; that root issue is the cheapening of human life which is like a disease in gang culture. For those plotting mass murder, it is very easy to rationalize it, given our current legislation, by simply saying that if a criminal does the same amount of time for one murder as he or she would do for ten (and even that time may be bargained down), then what is the real cost in committing the acts of callous brutality that are all too common across this country.

Stephen Harper likes to portray his party as the only one that is "tough on crime". Some may also criticize the Liberals for not making substantial improvements in violent crime legislation during their term of office. Up until now, however, the Liberal party caucus has never had a representative from Surrey to deliver your message on these issues. I have been a strong advocate within my party. My voting record on all of the crime bills that have been introduced in the House of Commons in the last session also shows that your voice continues to be loud and clear in supporting legislation that will make our neighbourhoods safe.

This Liberal initiative is a constructive way forward in making our streets safer and in ensuring that we are truly doing all we can to make this recent tragedy a thing of the past. Rest assured that I will be doing all I can to make this happen in Ottawa. If this government is truly serious about tackling crime, it will too.



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