

For Immediate Release
November 2nd, 2011

Promise to fix crime in Winnipeg comes up empty

A claim made recently by Public Safety Minister Vic Toews that Bill C-10 will solve Winnipeg's crime problem "is a promise as empty as tax-payers' pockets are about to become", observed John Hutton, Executive Director of the John Howard Society of Manitoba

Toews was commenting to a local radio station in the wake of Winnipeg's latest two murders which sets a record for the year, and were likely drug related according to the Winnipeg Police Service.

"Minister Toews has not offered any evidence in support of his statement and is ignoring 30 years of historical evidence showing that introducing mandatory minimums does not produce a meaningful decrease in crime", Hutton stated.

"Nor will it address the kind of crime we are seeing in Winnipeg right now. Minimum sentences for drug offences have done nothing to reduce drug violence in the United States – if anything the gangs are stronger and have now expanded into Canada. As well, the murder rate in the US, after 30 years of trying to be 'tough on crime' is now three times higher than that of Canada."

"Bill C-10, in essence is simply doing more of what isn't working – it is time for a new approach. Look at Texas," Hutton urged. "They cut back on incarceration, used the money saved to pay for more drug rehabilitation programs and saw an immediate drop in crime rates. Britain is doing the same. The problem is, after we pay for Bill C-10 there won't be anything left for solutions that do work."

Noting that Manitoba Attorney General Andrew Swan has endorsed many parts of Bill C-10, "the John Howard Society calls on the Manitoba Government to withdraw its support of the omnibus, and focus instead on fully funding the many local solutions, proven to work, to meet the needs of Manitobans. That would be money well spent." Hutton concluded.

-30-

For more information, contact

John Hutton
Executive Director,
775-1514 (315) of 612-4570