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KERRY-LYNNE FINDLAY ON CBA CONCERNS

ROY GREEN (Host): So let's find out what the federal government's response is to the Canadian Bar Association's expressed concerns about the government's actions with the omnibus legislation and other initiatives as far as justice in this country is concerned. Kerry-Lynne Findlay is the Member of Parliament for Delta-Richmond East in British Columbia. She is the Parliamentary Secretary to the federal Minister of Justice Rob Nicholson, and she attended the CBA conference in Halifax with the minister. Miss Findlay thanks you for the time and just let's start with this. You heard the concerns, I imagine, expressed by Mister Gottardi. You heard them certainly when you attended the CBA conference. What is the government's reaction to the Canadian Bar Association's challenges, if you will, to the initiatives undertaken by your government?

KERRY-LYNNE FINDLAY (MP, Delta-Richmond East): Thank you Roy. Firstly I'd like to say that I've been a long time member of the Canadian Bar Association; I'm a former branch president in British Columbia. So I know the CBA, I know the good work it does, and certainly the justice ministry, we may not always agree on everything, but we do acknowledge the value of our partnership with the CBA and the exchange of views is always helpful. But on the... For an overarching statement I'd like to say that for our government, we went to the people, we laid out our agenda to them, and we have received their confidence in terms of the mandate to govern. And when we

talked to them about law and order issues we heard over and over again that that they were tired of a system that overlooked the rights of victims of crime and law abiding Canadians. And because of those failures in the justice system that offend the community sense of justice we are moving forward with our intention to make victims of crime as important a factor as looking at the accused and their background.

GREEN: Well Mister Gottardi says that some of the legislation in the omnibus bill hasn't been properly vetted, isn't clearly understood. What do you say?

FINDLAY: Most of the bills that will show up in any omnibus legislation, the vast majority of them have been introduced more than once. In fact the minister stated at the CBA conference that more than one of them have been reintroduced now three or four times. So there has actually been a lot of discussion and a lot of debate on the substance of what we're doing. But regardless of that we still have a process to go through. An omnibus legislation is introduced just like any other legislation, which means it's vetted through Committee; it's debated on the floor of Parliament. There is opportunity... And I'm on that Committee. There are members from each of the recognized parties on that committee, all of whom are very knowledgeable.

GREEN: So the process is followed. The process is followed.

FINDLAY: The process absolutely is followed.

GREEN: Yeah.

FINDLAY: It isn't some sort of different process for this.

GREEN: Yeah. We have seconds here Miss Findlay. Will there be open dialogue between the government and the CBA? Can they look forward to hearing... having an exchange with the government?

FINDLAY: Absolutely. We talked about that at the CBA meeting and privately within those meetings as well. And the CBA's comments of course are always welcome.

GREEN: Sure.

FINDLAY: But we do see a mandate and we intend to fulfill it.

GREEN: All right. Well you've got the majority government from Canadians, and you certainly did put crime and law and order -- my term -- as a cornerstone of the campaign. Thank you so much for the time.

FINDLAY: Thank you.

GREEN: Kerry-Lynne Findlay is the parliamentary secretary to the federal Minister of Justice.