



**SPEAKING NOTES FOR**

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**PARLIAMENTARY SECRETARY TO THE  
MINISTER OF JUSTICE AND ATTORNEY GENERAL OF CANADA**

**FOR THE**

**STEVESTON ROTARY CLUB**

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**Thank you for that kind introduction, President Peter.**

**Good morning, Executive members and Rotarians. As a former Rotarian I am well aware of Rotary's commitments locally and internationally to high ethical standards, to improving our neighbourhoods, contribute to a better society, and both initiate and support successful child health initiatives.**

**It is a great pleasure to be here in Steveston with you today. C'est un grand plaisir d'etre ici a Steveston aujourd'hui avec vous.**

**As has been mentioned, after I was elected on May 2<sup>nd</sup> in our riding of Delta-Richmond East, as part of the majority federal Conservative Government, I was appointed Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Justice and Attorney General for Canada later that month. It remains peculiar to me that our riding is called Delta and only encompasses South Delta, and Richmond East but Steveston is most definitely Richmond South!**

**Since then, I have been immersed in:**

- ✦ setting up my constituency and Ottawa offices,**
- ✦ dealing with issues that matter most to those of us lucky enough to live in our beautiful corner of Canada – issues like dredging, the importance of our Fraser River basin, job creation, our positioning as the Pacific Gateway to Canada, crime and its impact in our community, the jet fuel pipeline, supporting Steveston's**

**unique historic character, health care, seniors, its a pretty long list - ,**

- ✦ participating in the debate, consultation, and legislative initiatives aimed at keeping our economy strong in an uncertain international climate, and**
- ✦ promoting greater confidence in our criminal justice system.**

**I thought I would start by telling you of the economic consultations that we are engaged in presently, and then tell you about our Government's justice initiatives so you have a sense of what our focus has been and where we are headed.**

**If there is time afterward, I would welcome questions or take the opportunity to tell you a bit about life in Ottawa for a new M.P.**

## **THE ECONOMY**

**Right now, we are in a pre-Budget consultation phase and have started holding consultative meetings across Canada since the New Year. Yesterday, for example, I met with Richmond and Delta Chamber of Commerce representatives and other Richmond business leaders to gain their input, co-hosted with Alice Wong, Minister of State for Seniors and our neighbouring Richmond M.P.**

**If any of you have ideas, or would like to identify priorities to us, there is a website you can go to that I can leave with your President [<http://www.fin.gc.ca/prebudget-prebudgetaire/l-eng.asp>]**

**As part of your consideration, you should know that the economy continues to be our Government's top priority. We have a strong record of supporting strong growth and job creation with positive initiatives such as:**

- ✦ expanding trade and opening new markets – for the export of Canadian good and services**
- ✦ investing in research and development – to create jobs and entrepreneurial opportunities**
- ✦ investing in skills training**
- ✦ eliminating red tape, and**
- ✦ keeping taxes low – to help families balance budgets and provide a competitive business environment that supports job-creating investment and expansion**

**As we prepare our next budget, it is crucial that we continue to listen to Canadians on the best ways to create jobs and economic growth. We want to ensure that we get your views.**

## **JUSTICE INITIATIVES**

**Although Canada has one of the best justice systems in the world, there is - nevertheless - still a need to keep pace with change, and to adapt and update our laws.**

**Our day-to-day lives have changed a great deal since Canada's Criminal Code was first enacted in 1892. Much like other democracies around the world, Canadian society and its values have and are continuously evolving, and our justice system needs to evolve as well.**

**Our Conservative Government under the leadership of Prime Minister Harper has been committed to the safety of our citizens and to respecting victims of crime, as well as making streets and communities safe. It is what Canadians expect of our justice system in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.**

**Part of this focus is maintaining the integrity of the justice system – to make it more efficient and effective, and more fair.**

**This is a great challenge, given that our justice system has many components, and must take into account the needs of the provinces and territories, along with many organizations and stakeholders. We continue to dialogue to identify both the major issues and the best solutions.**

**As a Government, we have a responsibility to ensure that the justice system provides fair and efficient results for victims of crime and all Canadians.**

**When our government was first elected in 2006, one of our immediate goals was to restore a sense of balance to Canada's justice system.**

**Despite what our critics say, we believe in a balanced and comprehensive approach to justice - an approach that is responsive to what is happening on the streets.**

**Our Government wants to prevent further victimization and make sure that Canada's most serious, violent criminals are kept off our streets.**

**Under the previous administration, year after year, we heard stories of violent criminals who re-offended immediately upon their release.**

**Not surprisingly, many Canadians found this offensive and it has led to a serious lack of confidence in our justice system.**

**In 2004, and in every election since, the Conservative Party of Canada has run on a promise to put the rights of victims and law-abiding Canadians first.**

**We have taken strong, decisive action with respect to our justice legislation - and this has been the direct response to the very clear message Canadians gave us to correct the inherent inadequacy of the laws as they stood – to restore a sense of balance.**

**We are very proud of what we have accomplished.**

**Back in May 2008, Bill C-13, known as *An Act to amend the Criminal Code (criminal procedure, language of the accused, sentencing and other amendments)*, received Royal Assent, and it has helped strengthen and modernize criminal law by making technical amendments to improve procedures and correct or clarify certain *Code* provisions.**

**A more recent example is our action on mega-trials.**

**As I'm sure you're aware, it has become increasingly difficult to ensure that such trials take place and are**

**completed within a reasonable time. Trials that feature complex evidence, multiple accused and numerous charges and witnesses consume a great deal of the court's time.**

**They also cause excessive delays and can increase the length of pre-trial detention.**

**Worse, they increase the risk of mistrials.**

**Mega-trials may be hard to avoid, but the manner in which they are conducted are being improved.**

**Our Government worked swiftly to propose Bill C-2, the *Fair and Efficient Criminal Trials Act*, which was introduced this past June and came into force shortly thereafter.**

**This legislation strengthens case management by empowering Case Management Judges to, among other things, rule upon preliminary issues and decide on admissibility of evidence.**

**It also reduces duplication of processes through permitting joint hearings and allowing amendments to direct indictments.**

**And it improves criminal procedure by increasing the maximum number of jurors from 12 to 14, and instituting measures to better protect the identity of the jurors.**

**The measures in this legislation will help streamline the prosecution of offences involving organized crime, drug trafficking, white-collar crime and terrorism.**

**This legislation follows up on recommendations of the Steering Committee on Justice Efficiencies and Access to the Justice System, and Justice experts Chief Justice Patrick LeSage and Justice Michael Code of Ontario.**

**Because there can be no true justice if people – especially our most vulnerable – fear for their safety and security - we need to move toward a safer Canada, and a justice system in which Canadians can continue to have confidence.**

**That is why our Government introduced the *Safe Streets and Communities Act* (Bill C-10) which is now before the Senate. It addresses a wide range of significant law-and-order issues that affect our society.**

**Among other things, this bill will help protect children from sexual predators by increasing penalties for sexual offences against children, as well as creating two new offences that take aim at conduct that could facilitate the sexual abuse of a child.**

**It also targets organized drug crime, when aggravating factors are present, by creating tougher sentences for the production and trafficking of illicit drugs.**

**It will ensure our justice system responds to the problems posed by youth crime by using fair and appropriate measures to hold young people accountable when they break the law.**

**It will also put an end to the use of conditional sentences or house arrest for serious violent and property crimes, such as sexual assault, human trafficking, arson, breaking and entering, luring a child, and kidnapping.**

**Finally, our Bill takes steps to prevent the trafficking, abuse and exploitation of vulnerable immigrants.**

**In addition to Bill C-10, we have also moved forward on legislation that provides clear direction on the appropriate use of citizen's arrest, and streamlines and simplifies the self-defence and defence of property provisions in the *Criminal Code*.**

**Many victims of crime feel they have no voice in the justice system. Our government has made progress in giving victims both a greater voice and greater access to services notably by establishing the Office of the Federal Ombudsman for Victims of Crime. And we continue to collaborate successfully with the provincial governments on victims' issues.**

**But victims of crime and their families also deserve to know that we are taking action to keep dangerous offenders off our streets.**

**Two pieces of legislation that came into force this past December attest to our commitment.**

**Bill S-6 eliminates the "faint-hope" clause, ensuring that criminals who commit first-degree murder will no longer be**

**eligible for early parole until they serve the full 25 years of their sentence.**

**And Bill C-48 ensures truth in sentencing, so that those who commit more than one murder will face the possibility of serving parole ineligibility periods consecutively. This means the length of their sentence will better reflect the severity of their crimes.**

**Both these pieces of legislation will help ensure that the concerns of the families and loved ones of murder victims are taken into account within Canada's justice system, and that Canadians will know that criminals are held accountable for their crimes.**

**We have also recently acted through Bill C-21, the *Standing Up For Victims of White Collar Crime Act*, which includes a mandatory minimum penalty of at least two years for fraud over \$1 million, and it toughens sentences by adding aggravating factors that courts can consider.**

**In addition, our Government is acknowledging the role of technology in facilitating crime. There is now legislation in effect to deal with the growing threat of identity theft and, more recently, Internet child pornography. Under Bill C-22, which came into force last December 8, those who provide Internet services are now required to report tips to the Canadian Centre for Child Protection about Web sites that make child pornography available to the public.**

**And here, I must also acknowledge the efforts of provincial and territorial governments who have already enacted or are contemplating legislation on mandatory reporting of child pornography.**

**But as we all know, reform of the justice system is not restricted to legislative amendments.**

**Indeed, our government always welcomes the opportunity to collaborate in innovative ways with our partners in the provinces, territories, the police, members of the Bar, as well as other non-governmental organizations and groups to reach our shared goals, as we have in the past.**

**I am confident that the the steps we are taking will lead to improved efficiency and effectiveness in our criminal justice system.**

**Ultimately, a sound economy and a sound justice system are essential components of sustaining and building the country Canadians want and to which we all aspire.**

**Thank you! Merci!**