
Date

MP _____

Name

House of Commons

Ottawa, Ontario

K1A 0A6

Re: Tightening Bail Laws to Protect Victims of Intimate Partner Violence

Dear _____

MP Name

I am writing because I am concerned that Canada's weak bail laws fail to protect the victims of repeated intimate partner violence (IPV). Granting bail to a repeat IPV offender leaves the victim in danger, as **50%** of IPV offenders violate their bail conditions and often seek out their victim again (Beeby, Dean, Global News).

These two **examples illustrate how weak bail laws have failed to protect victims**. Bridget Takyi left her home and two young children to walk to her car to drive to her waitress job at Pearson International Airport in Toronto. She was attacked, stabbed numerous times, then set on fire. Police charged Emmanuel Owusu-Ansah with first degree murder. Owusu-Ansah **was out on bail following charges** of assault, assault with a deadly weapon and threatening to kill Takyi (Bail and Violence Against Women, January 2013).

Darian Hailey Henderson-Bellman, 25, was shot multiple times and killed by Darnell Reid, her former partner, on July 28, 2020. **Reid was arrested four times for violating his bail terms** by contacting the victim following a violent domestic incident and for possession of illegal guns. Despite clear concerns regarding risk to the victim he was released into the community with a GPS monitoring device. Peel Region Police Chief Nishan Duraippah called the case a "complete failure" of our Justice System.

Currently, the bail procedures of the Canada's criminal justice system leave victims of IPV vulnerable. The Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms states that an accused person is not to be denied bail without just cause. After being arrested and charged, a person may be released pending the court date, or kept in custody. If kept in custody, the accused is usually brought before a Justice within 24 hours for a bail hearing to determine if they will be released until the trial date. This could be months or even a year or more from the date of arrest. Under the Criminal Code the victim is entitled to receive, **on request**, a copy of the bail hearing order. Strengthening the laws around bail could greatly improve the safety and well-being of victims of IPV, and even their survival. Further, increased funding for IPV prevention programs could go a long way to help. Programs like "Changing Ways" and "Caring Dads" have had impressive results in reducing reoffending rates by 50% over two years.

I urge the Government of Canada to strengthen the Criminal Code to protect victims of IPV. Firstly, by limiting bail to first time IPV offenders who have not violated any previous bail conditions and who have not committed a weapons-related offence. Secondly, making it a legal duty to inform victims **automatically** in a timely manner when an offender is released on bail, and about the conditions of

release. As well, all levels of government in Canada can work together to provide adequate funding for the mandatory attendance of IPV offenders at victim prevention programs in order to reduce repeat offences. I look forward to hearing your government's plans for action.

Yours sincerely,

Signature

Print Name

Address (if you wish to receive a reply)
