



St. Leonard's
Society of
Canada

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du Canada



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THE CORRECTIONS AND CONDITIONAL RELEASE ACT: 30TH ANNIVERSARY

OTTAWA, ON/Algonquin Territory: On the 30th anniversary of the *Corrections and Conditional Release Act (CCRA)*, St. Leonard's Society of Canada (SLSC) is taking the opportunity to reflect on the important purpose of this legislation that came into force three decades ago today. The *CCRA* was enacted in 1992, grounded in the *Charter of Rights and Freedoms* and important policy frameworks, and established the *CCRA*'s purpose of contributing to a just, peaceful, and safe society through conditions of release that facilitate rehabilitation and reintegration.

The *CCRA*'s purpose, along with its guiding principles, established a foundation for Canada to achieve effective and meaningful conditional release and community integration within the context of its core principle of the protection of society. As SLSC marked its own 55th anniversary earlier this year, it is important for us to take stock of how this important shift in policy impacted people within and beyond our network. This shift offered validation at the Federal level of the work which was already being undertaken within the community corrections sector to provide meaningful, effective, and humane opportunities for people to return to the community and rebuild their lives. SLSC acknowledges the important contributions of those who spent years researching, consulting, and developing policy to establish an evidence-based foundation for the *CCRA*. In many ways, it demonstrated the true capacity of what can be achieved when collaborative relationships between the public service and the voluntary sector are valued and guided by shared principles.

Today, the efficacy of how Canada achieves the *CCRA*'s purpose or implements its principles can be examined to infinite degrees – especially following legislative changes that many who understand effective corrections know to be counterproductive. While the *purpose* of the *CCRA* remains a principle-based perspective to achieve better outcomes for all, problems in the *implementation* of the legislation persist. Over SLSC's history and since the last 30 years of the *CCRA*'s coming into force, our organization has seen internationally acclaimed achievements in corrections, as well as devastating outcomes for the people who live and work within the criminal justice system.

As SLSC looks to the future, key activities that fall within the scope of the *CCRA* will be to continue to consider how Canada will better achieve a just, peaceful, and safe society. These considerations will largely be focused through a lens of: improving options for conditional release for people who are aging or elderly inside prisons; and, for addressing the mass incarceration of Indigenous Peoples and racialized peoples. As Canadians, we must all consider what it takes – collectively – to take meaningful steps towards reducing an over-reliance on incarceration, and instead prioritize access to conditional release that achieves the *CCRA*'s purpose. SLSC looks forward to playing its part in ensuring that the next 30 years reflects the most humane and evidence-based ways to achieve our vision for safer, healthier, and more inclusive communities.