



ALBERTA  
JUSTICE AND SOLICITOR GENERAL

*Office of the Minister  
MLA, Calgary - Elbow*

AR 36012

December 5, 2019

Honourable David Lametti  
Minister of Justice and Attorney General  
House of Commons  
Parliament Buildings  
Ottawa ON K1A 0A6

Dear Minister Lametti:

Congratulations on your successful election campaign and your reappointment as Minister of Justice and Attorney General.

On election night, Prime Minister Justin Trudeau said to Albertans: "I've heard your frustration and I want to be there to support you." I look forward to working with you to make that promise a reality. With no ministers from Alberta in the federal government, we hope you will be especially mindful of the need to take our concerns seriously, and to work constructively with our government to address them in the best interest of our national economy and national unity.

As Alberta's Minister of Justice and Solicitor General, I strongly believe the first duty of government is to protect public safety. We are standing up for Albertans by acting on concerns to deter crime, reinforce the rights of law-abiding property owners, and giving victims a stronger voice in the justice system.

As you may be aware, the Government of Alberta is committed to responding to widespread and increasing rural crime after four years that saw skyrocketing crime rates in many of Alberta's rural communities. We believe that rural Albertans deserve better and we are committed to ensuring all Albertans feel safe, secure, and protected in their communities.

As part of our government's Rural Crime Strategy, we are calling on you to amend the *Criminal Code's* Principles of Sentencing for rural crime offences.

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We propose that the following facts be considered as aggravating factors to help protect rural Albertans and Canadians, including evidence that the accused:

- selected a remote location to commit the crime in recognition of the victim's enhanced vulnerability;
- refused to depart the scene of a break and enter or theft when confronted by the property owner; and/or
- was armed with a weapon and/or exhibited threatening behaviour to the victim or other persons on the property.

We are also requesting that the crime crisis in our rural communities be placed at the top of the agenda at the meeting of the country's Attorneys General in Victoria. Our government hopes you share our belief that rural Canadians should feel their justice system protects them, their loved ones, and their property.

Our government also requests that you conduct a review of the standards of disposition of those determined to be "not criminally responsible" (NCR) by review boards under section 672.54 of the *Criminal Code*. For persons found NCR, section 672.54 of the *Criminal Code* states that a review board's paramount consideration should be public safety. However, our government believes that the threshold and standard used to assess and determine that risk is set too high. Requiring review boards to impose the least restrictive conditions as outlined in the subsection runs counter to the protection of public safety and security.

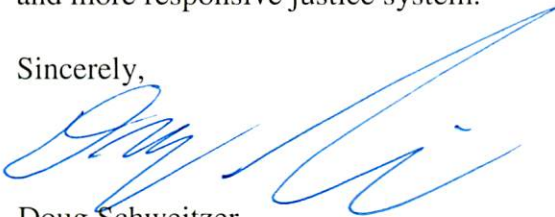
In consideration of the safety of all Canadians, we request that you amend the *Criminal Code* to address the standards that a review board must consider before it begins reducing the restrictions or conditions on a person found NCR to better ensure the safety of the public. We also request that you ensure that review boards put in place protocols that ensure the maximum possible role for the families and loved ones of the victims of crime to participate in the hearing process.

We also hope that you share our concern for the growing challenge of opioid addiction in this province. On average, two Albertans die every day due to opioid addiction. To help stop people from being stuck in the cycle of addiction-related crime from reoffending, our government has made a historic investment to expand drug treatment courts. To ensure individuals get the support and treatment they need, we also need your government to increase resources for drug treatment courts so that non-violent offenders get the support and treatment they need. Our government has also prioritized funding specialized law enforcement units to disrupt organized crime and the drug trade and we require your government to also increase resources for drug interdiction strategies and restore mandatory minimum sentences for drug traffickers.

Our government has also prioritized providing the justice system with the tools and resources necessary to protect law-abiding Albertans and ensure serious criminals are behind bars. To that end, we request that you fill all current vacancies in the Court of Queen's Bench of Alberta and in the Court of Appeal of Alberta to alleviate waiting times in the courts. Furthermore, we call on your government to appoint additional Justices to the Court of Queen's Bench to serve some of Alberta's smaller judicial districts as part of a commitment to smaller communities in the Prairie Provinces, which are underrepresented compared to similar regions in other provinces. As well, we look forward to continuing to explore your offer to establish a unified family court in Alberta.

The Government of Alberta will continue to fight for a fair deal for Alberta, and work to ensure federal policies can be improved to meet the needs of Albertans. A letter from Alberta will be forthcoming outlining our outstanding questions and concerns related to the federal *Act Respecting First Nations, Inuit and Metis Children, Youth and Families*. I look forward to meeting with you in the near future and working with you to ensure all Albertans know their governments stand with them and support them by prioritizing their safety with a fairer, faster, and more responsive justice system.

Sincerely,



Doug Schweitzer  
Minister of Justice and Solicitor General

cc: Honourable Jason Kenney  
Premier of Alberta