



Information from **Victims Services**, Solicitor General and Public Security

Dear Colleagues:

<http://www.pm.gc.ca/eng/media.asp?id=4763>

## **New Federal Income Support for Parents of Murdered or Missing Children**

20 April 2012  
Sherbrooke, Quebec

The Government of Canada is committed to supporting victims of crime and their families. To this end, on April 20, 2012, Prime Minister Stephen Harper announced a new federal income support program that will help ease the financial hardship of parents struggling to cope with the death or disappearance of a child which occurred as a result of a crime.

Beginning on January 1, 2013, this new income support benefit – which is expected to support an estimated 1,000 families annually – will provide \$350 per week for up to 35 weeks to parents of murdered or missing children (less than 18 years of age) whose death or disappearance is the result of a *Criminal Code* offence. Support for this new income benefit is being provided through the Federal Income Support for Parents of Murdered or Missing Children.

To receive this new benefit, affected parents will need to have earned a minimal level of income in the previous calendar year (\$6,500) and take leave from their employment. The government will propose amendments to the *Canada Labour Code* to allow for unpaid leave for employees under federal jurisdiction to ensure that their jobs are protected while they are receiving the new benefit.

If the missing child is found while the benefit is being paid, the benefits will continue for two weeks after the child is found to allow the parents to spend time with their child. This will be contingent on meeting other entitlement criteria (that is, they have not resumed working, they have not exhausted their benefits, and it has not been more than one year since the disappearance). Parents can apply for this program through Service Canada.

### **Other Government action to support victims of crime**

Responding to concerns of victims of crime is a Government priority. In 2007, the Government provided \$52 million over four years to enhance the Federal Victims Strategy and in 2010, provided additional funding for child advocacy centres and victim services for missing and murdered Aboriginal women.

Budget 2011 extended the Federal Victims Strategy by providing \$26 million over two years including funding for the Federal Ombudsman for Victims of Crime. Furthermore, the Government has recently introduced a series of bills aimed at prioritizing the rights of victims.

Economic Action Plan 2012 proposes to build on the Budget 2011 investment by enhancing support for the Victims Fund, which is a grants and contributions program that aims to lessen the burden of victims of crime in the criminal justice system.

### **National Victims of Crime Awareness Week 2012**

Today's announcement was made in advance of the seventh annual National Victims of Crime Awareness Week (NVCAW), which takes place from April 22 – 28, 2012. NVCAW is an opportunity

to raise awareness about victim issues and about the programs, services and laws in place to help victims of crime and their families.