

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE****Public Forum Urges Changes to the Bail and Criminal Justice System  
to Reduce Crowding and Improve Conditions at the Ottawa-Carleton Detention Centre**

September 30, 2014 – Ottawa – A crisis in our bail system and court delays are fuelling crowding, violence and inhumane conditions in the Ottawa-Carleton Detention Centre and jails across the country. The number of non-convicted people imprisoned in Canada’s jails who are awaiting their day in court has tripled over the past 30 years. This is a costly and unjust trend. An event being held tomorrow organized by the Canadian Civil Liberties Association (CCLA) and the Criminalization and Punishment Education Project (CPEP) will explore how governments at all levels can work together towards “Ending the Revolving Door of Pre-trial in Ottawa and Beyond”.

“This problem is especially bad in Ontario, where clogged courts and an inefficient bail system mean that people who have not been found guilty of anything are stuck for months in some of the worst detention centres in the country, and going through 10, 12, 15, or more court appearances just to have their cases heard,” said Aaron Doyle, a criminology professor at Carleton University who is active with CPEP. “Recent research by the Canadian Civil Liberties Association shows that Ontario has perhaps the most dysfunctional system in the country. Meanwhile, they are jamming three or four people into small cells with only one or two bunks, in terrible conditions. It’s not right and it’s also costing Ontario taxpayers a fortune.”

“In the past year we have seen three major reports, including one from the provincial government, recommending major changes to the bail system in Ontario,” said Abby Deshman, Director of the Public Safety Program with the CCLA. “There are solutions – we just need leaders within our government and the justice system to demonstrate the courage and resolve to implement meaningful reform.” The CCLA’s most recent report, *Set up to fail: Bail and the Revolving Door of Pre-Trial Detention*, offered a number of key recommendations for the Ontario government and professionals involved in the bail system, including a system-wide return to the presumption of innocence, increased judicial attention to *Charter* violations at the bail stage and reducing the widespread over-use of sureties in Ontario.

“With the appointment of [Madeleine Meilleur](#) as Attorney General and [Yasir Naqvi](#) as Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services there is a tremendous opportunity for change. Both represent Ottawa ridings in the Ontario legislature that are affected by what takes place inside the Ottawa-Carleton Detention Centre. Both have been given mandates from Premier Kathleen Wynne to do something about our dysfunctional bail and criminal justice system that sees so many warehoused unnecessarily before their court cases even see the light of day. This event will outline much needed reforms to restore the presumption of innocence and reduce the flow of prisoners into remand centres, all while working towards safer communities,” said Justin Piché, the public forum moderator, who is a criminology professor at the University of Ottawa and CPEP member.

This event is open to policy makers and local political representatives from all levels of government, as well as members of the general public and the media. Q&A will proceed immediately after the presentations and remarks from discussants.

**Event Details:**

Wednesday, October 1, 2014  
6:30pm to 8:00pm  
Fauteux Hall, Room 135  
Faculty of Law  
University of Ottawa

**Speakers:**

Abby Deshman, Director, Public Safety Program, CCLA  
Jacqueline Tasca, Policy Analyst, John Howard Society of Ontario

**Discussants:**

Marie-Eve Sylvestre, Vice-Dean, Civil Law, University of Ottawa  
Catherine Latimer, Executive Director, John Howard Society of Canada  
Alex Scantlebury, CEO of EBM Pro Writing and former OCDC prisoner

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