

Ontario Coalition on Reforming Segregation in Ontario's Correctional Institutions Ontario Election 2018 Statement

Justice is about people. The Coalition on Reforming Segregation in Ontario's Correctional Institutions (the Coalition) cares that people get the chances they need to live safe and healthy lives without prejudice based on their experiences with the criminal justice system.

We know it is possible to meet the public safety needs of Ontarians without sacrificing the integrity of our criminal justice system or the health and well-being of those who come into contact with it. We support approaches to public safety that are "smart on crime" and that are evidence-informed.

Research finds that the health status of people who are incarcerated is poor compared with the general Canadian population to begin with and that physical and mental health can be adversely affected by conditions of confinement. Segregation, for instance, can cause or exacerbate psychological distress, especially if prolonged or indefinite.

Healthy environments and access to health care can actually enhance public safety. In fact, improving health in people who experience detention and incarceration could lead to important secondary benefits for society, such as decreasing health care costs, improving health in the general population, improving public safety and decreasing rates of recidivism.

Ontario communities have a vested interest in preserving the well-being of people who are incarcerated considering their time in prison is temporary. In Ontario in 2014/2015, the median length of stay in remand was eight days and 76% of incarcerated people were sentenced to less than three months. As such, the issue of public safety should focus on safe and productive re-entry into the community and prevention of incarceration whenever possible. This is the critical work that will ensure the future safety of communities and where resources should be focused in order to best ensure public safety – and health.

Public safety is a priority for all, regardless of political stripe. This election, we call on all candidates to address what being "smart on crime" means to them.

Coalition Members

[Criminalization and Punishment Education Project](#)

– University of Ottawa and Carleton University

[Elizabeth Fry Toronto](#)

[Empowerment Council](#)

[John Howard Society of Ontario](#)

[Mothers Offering Mutual Support](#)

[Ontario Correctional Nurses' Interest Group](#)

[Registered Nurses' Association of Ontario](#)

[Schizophrenia Society of Ontario](#)

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