



Criminal Lawyers' Association
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Press Release For Immediate Distribution

Toronto, ON, June 25, 2009 – The Criminal Lawyers' Association (Ontario) challenges MPs to explain how harsh sentencing will make our communities safer. Today a parliamentary committee will examine Bill C-25, the law that will limit a judge's discretion in sentencing. The law has been widely criticized by social policy researchers and legal experts. The CLA's position is explained in an [opinion piece written](#) by the President, Frank Addario, and published this morning in the Globe and Mail online edition.

"There are flaws in the proposed reforms which need to be addressed" says Andras Schreck, a Director of the Criminal Lawyers' Association who will be addressing the Justice Committee. Bill C-25 will limit judicial discretion to give credit for so called "dead time," credit awarded in special circumstances for pre-trial incarceration. "This particular proposed amendment punishes the least fortunate caught up in the justice system," he said. "But it doesn't make anyone safer. Judges are not the problem."

The Minister of Justice, Honourable Rob Nicholson, aided by opposition MPs and the Attorney-General for Ontario, Honourable Chris Bentley, have been trying to convince taxpayers that Canada will be safer if criminal court judges have less discretion in sentencing. This is a view that the Criminal Lawyers' Association does not share. It can be shown to be incorrect by experience both in Canada and the United States. The CLA has previously [written to the Attorney General](#) explaining this. The next generations of Canadians will have to deal with the collateral consequences of the government's relentless reliance on harsh sentences.

The Criminal Lawyers' Association (CLA) is one of the largest specialty legal organizations in Canada, with more than 1,000 members. The CLA is a voice for everyone concerned with the quality of criminal justice and civil liberties in Canada. Our advice and perspective is sought frequently by all levels of government and the judiciary on issues relating to legislation and the administration of criminal justice. The CLA also assists its members in every aspect of the practice of criminal litigation. A list our membership and a more detailed description of our organization is located at <http://www.criminallawyers.ca/>

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