



Community Advocacy & Legal Centre

PRESS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

Date: February 15th, 2008

Compensation Review Poses Changes to CICB

Could Victims Lose Their Voice?

Ontario's system for compensating victims of crime is currently under review by the Honourable R. Roy McMurtry, retired Chief Justice of Ontario. The terms of reference for this review state its focus will be to refine the province's compensation system to better serve the needs of victims of crime.

However, there is a concern among legal clinics that this "refinement" of the Criminal Injuries Compensation Board (CIBC) could result in changes to the system that could leave victims of crime with insufficient resources for coping and healing.

Deirdre McDade, staff lawyer with the Community Advocacy and Legal Centre (CALC), has expressed her concern regarding these possible changes with a written submission to the McMurtry Victim Compensation Review. "Many of our clients cannot access the criminal or civil justice systems so CICB is their only access to justice," says McDade. "They feel that compensation provides important official recognition that they have been a victim of a crime."

The Review, however, is considering the feasibility of switching to an expense-based compensation system where victims of crime would be compensated for out-of-pocket expenses, rather than awards for pain and suffering. "All claims involving abuse should be adjudicated on an individual basis," says McDade. "Applications made by victims of abuse for pain and suffering based on emotional trauma cannot be properly evaluated using an expense-based system."

Local victims represented by CALC who were awarded compensation are expressing concerns regarding the proposed changes. "Being able to tell the CICB personally and have them recognize what happened to me helped me immensely. This was a big part of the healing process." Another victim says: "The CICB award has helped me out greatly. I am using the money to further my education. I am currently enrolled in college. Having this money gives me a safe feeling."

For further information about the contents of this press release, please call Deirdre McDade at 613-966-8686, ext 26 or Toll Free at 1-877-966-8686.

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In addition to her written submission, Deirdre McDade attended a consultation with the Honourable R. Roy McMurtry in Toronto on February 11th.

The Community Advocacy & Legal Centre (CALC) is a non-profit community legal clinic. The clinic was founded in 1980 and is currently staffed by lawyers, community legal workers, law clerks and support staff. We serve low income residents of Hastings, Prince Edward and Lennox & Addington counties. Our main office is in Belleville, with satellite locations in Trenton, Picton, Napanee, Bancroft and Madoc.

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Community Advocacy & Legal Centre
158 George Street
Belleville, ON K8N 3H2
www.communitylegalcentre.ca