

## Joint Statement

### Will the Omnibus Bill Bankrupt Canada?

**September 20, 2011 (Ottawa)** – Many Canadians are extremely concerned about the potential costs of the proposed Omnibus crime bill. As many in the United States are working to undo the fiscal and social devastation of so-called American style criminal and social justice approaches of longer sentences, the government plans to introduce new laws that will cost us tens of billions of dollars.

The government's Parliamentary Budget office projected the increase costs related to just one of bills would be more than five billion dollars – more than doubling current expenditures for the corrections system alone. Furthermore, he revealed that the provinces and territories would have to contribute the largest proportion of the increase.

Most people in jail are considered non-violent, by police and correctional authorities. In order to prevent more men, women, and especially children, from being marginalized, victimized, criminalized and imprisoned, Canadians are telling us and politicians that they would rather see their hard-earned tax dollars spent on public housing, child care, pensions, health care, mental health services, public education, victims and other social services.

Most of these services, as well as many policing and prison services are the responsibility of provincial and territorial governments. As such, we do not believe the federal government should be permitted to enact their proposed Omnibus Bill until the provinces, territories and the federal government:

- 1) have a clear understanding of the price tag attached to each proposed legislative or policy reform that is disclosed to the public; and
- 2) can assure Parliament that the expected increase in costs can be accommodated without exceeding 100% capacity of the correctional facilities and without increasing our current deficit.

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