

PETITION TO THE HOUSE OF COMMONS IN PARLIAMENT ASSEMBLED

We, the undersigned electors of Canada, draw the attention of the House of Commons to the following:

THAT, in spite of the continuing long-term decline in Canadian crime rates, the Government has chosen to adopt multi-billion dollar “tough on crime” policies modelled on American policies, which the US is abandoning because they have proven to be ruinously expensive failures;

THAT those policies are resulting in ever more inmates being crammed into already-full federal prisons, with inadequate rehabilitation programs and very limited treatment and help for aging inmates, the high proportion who suffer from serious mental illnesses and other mental and physical health concerns;

THAT overcrowding and the recent decision to embrace double-bunking are contrary to recognized corrections best practices, cause dangerous, high-stress workplaces for correctional staff and inmates, may violate federal law (CCRA Section 70), Charter and international human rights standards, and risk similar outcomes to those experienced in the United States – unacceptably high recidivism rates due to offenders completing their sentences angrier, more violent and less equipped to hold down a job than when initially convicted;

THAT expending many billions of our tax dollars by building more prison spaces and increasing incarceration, while failing to track key outcomes such as recidivism, and simultaneously cutting back on funding for crime prevention constitutes fiscal mismanagement;

AND THAT we, as Canadians, consider the soaring incarceration rate of our aboriginal citizens to be tantamount to systemic discrimination and a source of national shame;

