

THE JOHN MCKAY REPORT

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MEGA-JAILS WILL COST \$10 TO \$13 BILLION

It was almost painful to watch Stockwell Day attempting to stay “on message” when he spoke last week about the Harper plan to build more prisons for “unreported” crimes.

CRIME CONTINUES TO DECLINE

The secret plan to spend a fortune on new super-prisons coincides with Statistics Canada’s finding that crime continues to decline. This inconvenient fact prompted him to justify an enormous \$10-13 billion in new prison spending on unreported crime. Does this mean that they propose to lock up people who haven’t been criminally charged?

THE PRICE TAG WAS NOT REALISTIC

The Conservative government is misleading Canadians about the threat of crime in order to justify the out-of-control costs of their ideological punishment agenda. The Conservatives were never up front about the price tag for just one bill in their punishment agenda. They need to justify this out-of-control spending in the face of their record \$54-billion deficit. According to the Parliamentary Budget Officer, the cost of the *Truth in Sentencing*

Act will reach \$1 billion each year over five years, plus an estimated \$5-8 billion cost to the provinces over five years, for a total of \$10-13 billion. The Conservatives told Parliament the bill would cost a mere \$90 million.

THE DECISION WAS NOT BASED ON FACTS



Just as they spent \$16 billion on an untendered fighter jet contract, \$1.3 billion on the G20 boondoggle and \$30 million on gutting the census, the Conservatives are perfectly content to squander vast

sums of money on their ideological motivations while ignoring the facts or the best advice.

THE NUMBERS TELL THE TRUE STORY

The crime rate fell three percent in Canada last year, and is down 17 percent in the past decade, while the Crime Severity Index is down 22 percent since 1999. Violent crime is also down and

represents less than one-quarter of one percent of all crime, while the homicide rate is two-thirds of its peak in the 1970s.

**LIBERAL
CRITIC
DEMANDS
ANSWERS**



territories to address their very legitimate concerns about how they are going to fund \$5-8 billion in costs being dumped on them;

⇒ Provide a full justification for the

combined \$10-13 billion price tag of building new Republican-style super-prisons, including the evidence supporting Stockwell Day's statement about unreported crimes; and

⇒ Provide a full costing of the entire Conservative punishment agenda.

“It’s hardly surprising, given Mr. Harper’s attack on the census, that the Conservatives are clinging to blind ideology instead of knowledge and evidence,” says Liberal Public Safety Critic Mark Holland. “I am calling for full transparency on the costs and rationale behind the Conservative punishment agenda, and not just more empty rhetoric and expensive ideological pandering.”

FOUR STEPS TO HELP REPAIR THE DAMAGE

Mr. Holland called on the Harper government to:

⇒ **Reverse their cuts to crime prevention (70% cut) and victims programs (43% cut);**

⇒ **Sit down with the provinces and**

**WE CAN'T AFFORD THE MISGUIDED
HARPER AGENDA**

In a time of declining crime rates, Canadians deserve to know how much the Harper government’s priorities are costing them. Wasting our tax money on new prisons without factual evidence that they are needed is not sound financial management.

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