

# NATIONAL

## MEETING WITH PUBLIC SAFETY MINISTER NUMEROUS TOPICS DISCUSSED IN A MEETING THAT LASTED OVER AN HOUR

**On November 22, 2018, the Union met with Public Safety Minister Ralph Goodale and discussed several subjects. He was accompanied by his senior policy advisor Michael Milech. The Union was represented by Regional President - Prairies James Bloomfield, National Services Coordinator Francois Enault & National President Jason Godin.**

**PNEP** We clarified that UCCO-SACC-CSN is not in favour of any needle exchange programs and we had not been consulted on the PNEP introduced by CSC. We urged the Minister to slow down the roll out of this program, to not implement in units with acute mental health inmates, to recognize it as a health care issue (as many MPs have suggested) and to consider other options for this program to ensure we minimize any health & safety risks to officers and inmates. The Minister asked several questions, thanked us for the valuable perspective we offered. He also reviewed a document we provided him from our research in Europe on prison needle exchange programs.

**Following our meeting with Minister Goodale he told the House of Commons public-safety committee Tuesday he had a very good discussion with Godin last week and wants the Union to have “the absolute confidence” its work is respected. “It is critically important work and it is tough work,” Goodale said. “I want to make sure that as much as humanly possible we respond to the legitimate representations of the UCCO.”**

We are hopeful the pressure we have applied through media, our research on PNEP, mobilization and face-to-face discussions with several MPs and senators will prompt the government to stop the program or come up with alternative options.

### **BILL C-83 (ADMINISTRATIVE SEGREGATION)**

We provided the Minister with our brief on Bill C-83 which we submitted to the Public Safety Committee and testified on in the committee on November 8, 2018. We explained to the Minister that the bill in its current format would be impossible to operationalize without massive resources to do it. We also informed Minister Goodale that the recent change to CD 709 (administrative segregation) came with no funding which was promised by the department.

Finally, we expressed concerns about the elimination of disciplinary segregation, asking the Minister what will replace this. We need disciplinary measures/sanctions for inmates who have behavioural problems or those posing security issues. The Minister

was silent on our concerns around disciplinary segregation but suggested that our main concern with Bill C-83 was ensuring that appropriate staffing be in place for the safety and security of operating the potentially new SIU (structured intervention units) if the bill passes, to which we replied “yes”.

We thanked the Minister for including body scanners in bill C-83 to help us detect contraband from inside or entering our institutions, a health and safety tool the Union has been advocating for.

### **BLOOD SAMPLES ACT**

Minister Goodale asked if there had been any constitutional challenges on implementing a blood samples act for first responders. We explained that there had been in Ontario and the inmate challenge was dismissed. We also pointed out that now 7 out of 10 provinces enacted such legislation to deter assaults on peace officers. We emphasized that we need some consequences for inmates who throw urine or feces on us or spit on us. We provided the Minister with CSC data indicating that significant exposures are projected to increase over the next few years.

### **EXTENSION OF FIRST RESPONDER DEATH BENEFIT**

We asked the Minister to consider extending this benefit to the family of Correctional Officer Lesa Zoerb. Lesa died tragically in the line of duty in a service vehicle while returning from an outside escort. The Minister promised to follow up on our request and give us an answer.

Lastly, we extended an invitation to Minister Goodale to address front line Correctional Officers at our National General Assembly in May. The Minister seemed interested and asked his senior policy advisor to check his calendar.

We thanked the Minister for taking the extra time to meet with us on these important issues for Correctional Officers.

