

## GOVERNMENT OF CANADA MOVES TO STRENGTHEN THE *YOUTH CRIMINAL JUSTICE ACT*

OTTAWA, November 19, 2007 – The Honourable Rob Nicholson, Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, today introduced legislation that will provide new measures to protect communities from young offenders who pose a significant risk to public safety. The provisions include:

- **Amending the *Youth Criminal Justice Act (YCJA)* to allow courts to consider deterrence and denunciation as objectives of youth sentences.** Certain offences committed by young offenders are very serious, and this change would allow judges to impose punishments with the objective of deterring and denouncing these actions. Currently under the YCJA, the purpose of a youth sentence is to hold the young person accountable through meaningful consequences and rehabilitative measures; and
- **Changing the current pre-trial detention provision in the YCJA.** This will make it easier to detain youth in custody prior to their trials if the youth pose a risk to public safety.

"Criminal behaviour must have meaningful consequences, whether the offender is an adult or a youth," said Minister Nicholson. "These amendments to the *Youth Criminal Justice Act* are intended to help hold young lawbreakers accountable to their victims and their community, and instil within them a sense of responsibility for their delinquent or criminal behaviour."

Minister Nicholson added, "This Government is following through on our commitment to address problems posed by youth crime, and we will continue to work with the provinces and stakeholders to get this done."

In addition to legislative changes to the YCJA, Minister Nicholson announced last month that in 2008 a comprehensive review of the YCJA will be done to address concerns and criticism regarding various provisions and principles of the YCJA.

This legislative proposal is one in a new series of tackling community crime bills the Government of Canada will be introducing in this session of Parliament. This series is in addition to the comprehensive *Tackling Violent Crime Act* that will better protect youth from sexual predators, protect society from dangerous offenders, get serious with drug impaired drivers and toughen sentencing and bail for those who commit serious gun crimes.

In addition to its plan to strengthen the YCJA, the Government of Canada has:

- introduced a National Anti-Drug Strategy;
- invested in crime prevention community projects across Canada that target youth;
- announced a comprehensive review of the YCJA in 2008;
- passed legislation to increase penalties for those convicted of street racing;
- passed legislation to end conditional sentences for serious personal injury offences; and
- announced its intention to table legislation to protect Canadians from identity theft.

An online version of the legislation will be available at [www.parl.gc.ca](http://www.parl.gc.ca).

For more information:

Darren Eke  
Press Secretary  
Office of the Minister of Justice  
613-992-4621

Media Relations  
Department of Justice Canada  
613-957-4207