



## PORTAGE LA PRAIRIE & DISTRICT CHAMBER

The Senate of Canada  
Ottawa, ON K1A 0A4

**ATTN:**

The Honourable Charles S. Adler, Senator  
The Honourable Raymonde Gagné, Senator  
The Honourable Marilou McPhedran, Senator  
The Honourable Mary Jane McCallum, Senator  
The Honourable Flordeliz (Gigi) Osler, Senator

**Urgent: Support for Immediate Passage of Bail Reform Bill C-14**

On behalf of the Portage la Prairie & District Chamber of Commerce and the more than 200 businesses we represent, I am writing to express our urgent call for the immediate passage of Bail Reform Bill C-14.

Across Manitoba, and especially in communities like Portage la Prairie, businesses, employees, and residents are facing the growing and deeply concerning impacts of repeat offenders cycling through the justice system. The current bail framework is contributing to a pattern where individuals charged with serious or repeat offences are released, only to reoffend within short periods of time. This is not an abstract policy issue for our members. It is a daily reality affecting their safety, operations, and long term viability.

Local businesses are experiencing increased incidents of theft, vandalism, and in some cases violent encounters. These repeated disruptions carry real economic consequences, including rising insurance costs, property damage, staff burnout, and workforce retention challenges. Some businesses are making difficult decisions to reduce operating hours or reconsider their presence in certain areas altogether.

Beyond the economic impacts, there is a growing sense of fear and uncertainty in our communities. Business owners and employees are reporting heightened stress and fatigue from managing repeated incidents, and this is taking a measurable toll on mental health and overall well being.

Tragically, this issue extends beyond property crime and economic disruption. Across Manitoba, innocent lives have been lost in incidents involving repeat offenders who were released back into the community. The death of Kellie Verwey is one such example that has deeply affected Manitobans and underscores the real human consequences when gaps in the system are not addressed.

At the same time, this cycle is placing significant and unsustainable pressure on RCMP and local law enforcement. Officers are repeatedly responding to the same individuals and

incidents, which limits their capacity to address new and emerging issues in our communities. This strain not only impacts response times and public safety, but also contributes to burnout among those tasked with keeping our communities safe. Bill C-14 represents a critical step toward restoring balance and accountability within the bail system. Ensuring that repeat and high risk offenders face stricter conditions, or are not released when they pose a clear risk, will help stabilize our communities and support economic resilience.

Our members are not calling for punitive measures without purpose. They are calling for a system that protects public safety while maintaining confidence in the rule of law. The current situation is unsustainable, and the cost of inaction continues to rise economically, socially, and personally.

We respectfully urge you to support and expedite the passage of Bill C-14. Manitoba's business community cannot afford further delay.

Thank you for your leadership and your consideration of this urgent matter. We would welcome the opportunity to discuss the experiences of our members in greater detail. Sincerely,

Stefanie Dunn

Executive Director

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Portage la Prairie & District Chamber of Commerce