

# ENDING VIOLENCE

Association of BC

**MEDIA RELEASE  
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
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**Vancouver, BC** – EVA BC was on hand yesterday to hear Prime Minister Stephen Harper announce new legislation that will be introduced this fall to protect children at home and abroad from sexual exploitation and violence. The federal government plans to table a bill that will result in the creation of a publicly accessible, searchable database of high-risk child predators and will require monitored predators to inform police if they plan to travel outside of Canada.

We commend the federal government's initiative in their ever-growing number of reforms aimed at keeping children safe from sexual predators. We hope to see similar reforms that focus on keeping Canadian women safe as well.

Crimes of sexual assault against women are endemic to Canadian society, as demonstrated by the number of hospital visits by sexual assault survivors, police reports and the heavy caseloads of frontline victim-serving organizations. Despite data we do have, it is critical to recognize that sexual assault is the most under-reported of all violent crimes. In 2008, a Statistics Canada report said that quantifying sexual assault continues to be a challenge, since the large majority (91%) are not reported to police.

The permission-giving, predator-empowering social rituals embedded in our culture such as the pro-rape chants by university students that came to light in recent weeks are all part of a very serious problem in Canada. The horrific, ultimately fatal tragedies of young women such as Amanda Todd, Rehtaeh Parsons and Kimberly Proctor, just to name a few, are sobering examples of the grave reality of sexual assault in our country and should serve to raise the alarm about how we are failing women and girls in our response. Too often, responders don't have proper training or policy or legislation to guide them and too often, these gaps result in terrible, unimaginable tragedies.

As has been demonstrated by the Prime Minister's vow that child sex crimes will draw stronger penalties and that he plans to create a policy and legislative platform that will keep children safer, all governments have a crucial role to play in developing legislation, policy, training and programs that, first and foremost, provide survivors with what they need in the immediate aftermath, regardless of age, and tells all Canadians, and indeed the world, that it is our collective intention to keep girls and women safe from sexualized violence.

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