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CABL's statement regarding Government of Canada's announcement regarding proposed amendments to the *Criminal Code* and to the *Controlled Drugs and Substances Act*

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The Canadian Association of Black Lawyers ("CABL") applauds the Canadian Federal Government and the Honourable David Lametti, Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, for introducing proposed amendments to the *Criminal Code* and to the *Controlled Drugs and Substances Act* that recognizes the systemic issues that have led to the over-incarceration and over-representation of Black and Indigenous persons. These amendments are an essential step toward creating a fairer and more just criminal justice system in Canada.

Specifically, CABL commends the following proposals:

- Repealing some of the mandatory minimum penalties of imprisonment (MMPs) for certain offences, which has contributed to higher incarceration rates and disproportionately affects Indigenous peoples and Black Canadians.
- Giving discretion to courts to consider alternatives to punitive measures that negatively impact Indigenous peoples and Black Canadians, including increasing the availability of conditional sentence orders (CSOs) and greater use of diversion programs.
- Requiring police and prosecutors to consider measures, such as diversion to addiction treatment programs for simple possession of drugs, rather than laying charges or prosecuting individuals for simple possession of an illegal drug.

Many of the proposed reforms adopt significant portions of the recommendations contained in CABL's open letter to Prime Minister Trudeau and Minister Lametti dated July 25, 2020. Click [here](#) to read the entire letter. CABL gives its sincere thank you to the members of its advocacy committee who prepared the letter. In particular, CABL recognizes the remarkable efforts of Former President of CABL, now The Honourable Justice Lori Anne Thomas, Raphael Eghan, Royland Moriah, Former Vice President of CABL Gordon Cudjoe and Stephen Simpson.

The proposed reforms are an essential step toward addressing some of the issues raised in the new report released by CABL, Ryerson's Faculty of Law and the University of Toronto on February 11, 2021 entitled "*Race and Criminal Injustice*". To read the entire report, click here: [CABL Report – Race and Criminal Injustice – Feb 10 2021](#).

Therefore, CABL urges Parliament to act expediently to ensure that these proposed reforms attain the force of law as soon as possible.

CANADIAN ASSOCIATION OF BLACK LAWYERS

The Canadian Black Lawyers Association was formed in March 1996, as a national network of law professionals with an overall mandate to promote the advancement of Black Lawyers within the profession by providing support systems, promoting academic and professional excellence and advancing issues of equity and diversity among the bar and judiciary.