



## **PUBLIC HAVE LOST CONFIDENCE IN THE JUSTICE SYSTEM**

Save Our Streets calls for changes to restore public trust and confidence in the justice system to protect our communities

**VANCOUVER, B.C. (Feb. 19, 2026)** – While the level of crime, violence and public disorder in communities throughout B.C. has resulted in over half the population afraid for the safety of their families, many victims have stopped reporting crimes. A lack of confidence in the justice system is the primary reason.

“The evidence of why the public are losing confidence in the justice system is before us every day,” stated Jess Ketchum, Co-Founder of Save Our Streets (SOS). “Prolific criminals with long records are arrested and released almost immediately only to commit their next crime and with no apparent consequences. Bail and release conditions are broken and there are no apparent consequences. These criminals need to be in jail if not to rehabilitate them then to protect the innocent in our communities.”

An SOS province-wide survey conducted by Research Co. reports that 90% of British Columbians believe crimes are going unreported and 71% state lack of confidence in the justice system as the reason.

“The public needs to have confidence that the justice system is there to protect the community against those who break the law,” Ketchum said. “Government’s primary function is the safety of its citizens and if citizens have lost that confidence, governments must take transformational action.”

Eighty-six per cent of British Columbians support harsher penalties, including jail, for repeat offenders and keeping those offenders behind bars while awaiting trial.

“We need changes that slam the revolving door on prolific violent and non-violent offenders and provide real deterrents to reoffending,” stated Ketchum.

SOS supports many aspects of Bill C-14, the *Bail and Sentencing Reform Act*, currently before the House of Commons Standing Committee on Justice and Human Rights in Ottawa. However, the community coalition is concerned the Bill falls far short as it does not address the most pressing issues facing downtowns, urban cores, main streets and family neighbourhoods.

Save Our Streets wants the Bill to include:

- Greater ability to deny bail for repeat offenders;
- Denial of bail upon breaching bail conditions;

- Increased consequences for violent and non-violent repeat offenders;
- Consecutive rather than concurrent sentencing for prolific offenders;
- Increased consequences for offenders if they are associated with organized crime;
- Ensuring the Principle of Restraint is not misconstrued to **require** minimal incarceration and/or conditions;
- Explicit language to ensure tertiary grounds are considered by the courts for repeat non-violent offenders, including shoplifting, be included as specific circumstances when considering whether detention is necessary to maintain confidence in the administration of justice, a statutory ground for detention.

Correcting the course and returning safety to our communities will require that prolific criminals be incarcerated faster and for longer terms. That will only happen with the province ensuring greater fluidity in our court system. That will require more support for prosecutors and judges and/or allowing police to lay charges without prosecutorial approval.

SOS also advocates for a complete build out of the continuum of care for those suffering from addiction and mental illnesses. Providing greater ease of access to that care would assist greatly in reducing the level of crime, violence and public disorder in B.C. communities.

### **Methodology**

Research Co conducted the survey of 1,210 BC residents on January 26<sup>th</sup> to 30<sup>th</sup>, 2026. The data has been statistically weighted according to Canadian census figures for age, gender and region in BC. The margin of error is +/- 2.8 percentage points, nineteen times out of twenty.

### **About Save Our Streets**

Save Our Streets is a coalition of 120-plus community and business organizations representing every corner of British Columbia. SOS members are committed to seeing governments bring order and public safety back to communities across British Columbia. Concerned citizen groups, and B.C. businesses interested in joining or supporting SOS are invited to submit online at [SaveOurStreets.ca](http://SaveOurStreets.ca) or contact [info@saveourstreets.ca](mailto:info@saveourstreets.ca).

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