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May 3, 2016

To Whom It May Concern:

The Canadian Resource Centre for Victims of Crime (CRCVC) has existed since 1993 to provide information, support and advocacy to victims and survivors of serious crime. We are pleased to offer our support for a private member's bill called the "*Protection of Pregnant Women and Their Preborn Children Act*" or "*Cassie and Molly's Law*" (Bill C-225), introduced by MP Cathay Wagantall on February 23 of 2016. This Bill addresses an urgent requirement in Canada to protect pregnant women who are vulnerable and/or in vulnerable circumstances and whom are most often targeted with violence.

Bill C-225 would amend the *Criminal Code* to allow additional charges to be laid when a preborn child is harmed or killed in an attack against the mother by someone who knows she is pregnant. Currently in Canada, victims of intimate partner violence are at greater risk of violence by their partners during pregnancy. Many women are targeted by offenders for simply being pregnant. Bill C-225 ensures that the criminal justice system takes a woman's pregnancy into consideration as an aggravating factor when sentencing those convicted of violence against women.

Violence against women committed by an intimate partner, is an important public health and human rights issue. In recent years, attention has focused also on intimate partner violence during pregnancy due to its prevalence, and adverse health consequences. Bill C-225 is a thoughtful response to the legal void that exists when an offender targets and kills both the expectant mother, and her unborn child. Such was the tragic case of Cassandra and Molly Kaake-Durham and of Olivia and Lane Jr. Talbot, victims of violence, resulting in their deaths. We support Bill C-225 which serves to protect women and their unborn children and hold violent offenders accountable.

Sincerely,

Heidi Illingworth  
Executive Director