



HOUSE OF COMMONS
CHAMBRE DES COMMUNES
OTTAWA, CANADA
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39th Parliament, First Session

The Standing Committee on Public Safety and National Security has the honour to present its

NINTH REPORT

Pursuant to Standing Order 108(2), and a motion adopted by the Committee on Tuesday, April 24, 2007, the Committee has agreed to report the following:

The Committee in principle fully supports the intention underlying Bill C-279, *An Act to amend the DNA Identification Act (establishment of indexes)*, and believes that the necessary steps must be taken, either by amending the *DNA Identification Act* or by providing for the establishment of a DNA human remains index and a DNA missing persons index, to help law enforcement agencies to search for and identify persons reported missing.

Mike Wallace, MP, sponsor of the Bill, appeared before the Committee to argue in support of this legislative initiative. The Committee commends his hard work and commitment to addressing this issue of serious concern to many Canadians, including all members of this Committee.

Bill C-279 and its predecessors have garnered widespread support from many Canadians and the Committee agrees that the issues raised in these legislative initiatives must be dealt with in a comprehensive and workable manner.

The subject matter dealt with by Bill C-279 has been the subject of federal-provincial-territorial discussions. In November 2005, after completion of a public consultation process earlier that year, federal-provincial-territorial ministers responsible for justice confirmed their commitment to developing options for effective missing persons indexes and directed the Working Group on missing persons indexes, established in 2003, to conduct detailed work on the cost, privacy aspects, and legal implications of such an initiative.

In addition to this, related work is being carried out by the federal-provincial-territorial Working Group on Missing Women, established in February 2006, where the potential use of DNA arises.

The federal-provincial-territorial Working Group on missing persons indexes will be presenting its findings to the federal-provincial-territorial Assistant Deputy Ministers Committee on Policing at the end of May 2007, and will be making a final report to Deputy Ministers in June 2007. Deputy Ministers are expected at that time to review the report and specific recommendations so as to determine what will be presented to federal-provincial-territorial

Ministers at their meeting in the fall of 2007. The Committee looks forward to hearing from the officials who appeared before it on April 24, 2007, following this meeting so as to receive a progress report.

Although federal-provincial-territorial work on the establishment of a missing persons indexes mechanism has made considerable progress, more needs to be done to resolve jurisdictional, resource, operational and other issues.

The Committee believes that the Uniform Law Conference of Canada should be requested to review relevant federal, provincial, and territorial legislation so as to ensure that it is harmonized to facilitate the co-operative implementation of a DNA missing persons indexes mechanism.

Finally, the Committee also has concerns about some aspects of Bill C-279 in its present form.

Given the reasons outlined above and the evidence heard during its consideration of Bill C-279, the Committee looks forward to an expected Government legislative initiative after completion of the federal-provincial-territorial discussions to comprehensively address the issues dealt with by Bill C-279.

RECOMMENDATION

The Committee recommends that the Government consider the advisability of bringing in the legislation necessary to establish missing persons indexes after the completion of federal-provincial-territorial discussions on its implementation.

REQUEST FOR GOVERNMENT RESPONSE

Pursuant to Standing Order 109, the Committee requests that the government table a comprehensive response to this Report.

A copy of the relevant *Minutes of Proceedings* (Meetings No. 39, 40) is tabled.

Respectfully submitted,

Garry Breitkreuz, M.P.
Chair