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SUPERVISED ACCESS TO DRUGS

Statement by:

The Honourable Larry W. Campbell

Tuesday, May 12, 2015

THE SENATE

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Hon. Larry W. Campbell: Honourable senators, the following statement is endorsed by 124 organizations from across Canada regarding Bill C-2, An Act to amend the Controlled Drugs and Substances Act (respect for communities act):

We believe in health, human rights, harm reduction, scientific evidence and the well-being of our communities.

Bill C-2, currently before Parliament, undermines all of these by setting out an excessive and unreasonable process for health authorities and community agencies looking to open, or maintain, desperately needed supervised consumption services for people who use drugs.

Supervised consumption services are health services that provide a safe, hygienic environment where people can use pre-obtained drugs under the supervision of trained staff. They are part of a broader harm reduction approach to substance abuse and are not exclusive of drug treatment programs; they are complementary.

Supervised consumption services are also part of a continuum of care for people who use drugs. They are

offered in facilities where nurses and peers work together to provide much-needed care, education and support.

Scientific evidence clearly shows that supervised consumption services reduce the risks of transmission of infectious diseases and overdose-related deaths. They improve access to health, treatment and social services for the most marginalized groups and contribute to the safety and quality of life of local communities by reducing the impact of open drug scenes.

The Supreme Court of Canada has recognized that preventing access to such critical health services violates human rights.

We strongly oppose Bill C-2 and ask our representatives to reject it and, instead of creating barriers, increase access to evidence-based prevention, harm reduction and treatment services in Canada. Our communities deserve better.

Honourable senators, due to time constraints I will not have sufficient time to read into the record every organization associated with this statement, but since I know you want to know more about this, I invite you to view the full list of names on my website at www.larrycampbell.ca.
