



September 29th, 2025

The Honourable Senator Leo Housakos
Senate of Canada
Ottawa, Ontario

Dear Senator Housakos,

Re: Bill S-233 (An Act to amend the Criminal Code (assault against persons who provide health services and first responders))

On behalf of the Paramedic Chiefs of Canada (PCC), I am writing to express our strong support for Bill S-233 and to offer our assistance in its careful consideration and advancement.

The Paramedic Chiefs of Canada is a national association representing organizational leadership across Canada's paramedic services. Our members include chief officers, directors, and executive leaders who are responsible for supporting safe, effective, and sustainable paramedic systems. We are deeply committed to advocating for the welfare, safety, and professional standing of paramedics and those who support them at every level of care.

Paramedics in Canada routinely face violence, harassment, and assault while performing their duties. In our Position Statement on Violence Against Paramedics, PCC affirmed a "zero tolerance" position on physical and verbal attacks directed at paramedics and support staff. ([Paramedic Chiefs][1]) Studies indicate that high proportions of paramedics have experienced threats or violence, with consequent psychological injury, stress, anxiety, and post-traumatic stress. ([Paramedic Chiefs][1]) Such violence erodes morale, threatens retention, and compromises the safety and quality of care for patients.

We believe that stronger legal protections are necessary measures that both deter assaults and ensure that harm done to those who serve in emergency care are appropriately considered in sentencing.

Bill S-233 would amend the Criminal Code to require courts, when sentencing offences such as assault (under section 264.1 or sections 266–269), to consider that the victim was a health services provider or first responder as an aggravating circumstance. ([Parliament of Canada][2]) This is a carefully calibrated change: it does not create distinct new offences, but ensures that when health service providers, paramedics or first responders are assaulted while performing their duties, the justice system must explicitly take that into account.

PCC views this approach as a meaningful, proportionate, and enforceable step toward enhancing deterrence and recognizing the special risks borne by emergency responders. We commend your leadership in bringing forward this bill, and we pledge to advocate for its passage.

We would be honoured to assist the Senate, the Standing Senate Committee, or any parliamentary forum considering Bill S-233. Specifically, we offer:

- * To appear before committee as expert witnesses (or to coordinate paramedic testimony)
- * To consult on implementation considerations from an operational and systems perspective
- * To engage our membership and stakeholders in respectful advocacy and public education

We would welcome the opportunity to meet with your office (and/or committee staff) and representatives of PCC to discuss in more detail how we can most effectively support the bill's progress.

Violence should never be part of a paramedic's job description. We believe Bill S-233 is a constructive and necessary legislative step toward ensuring that those who protect and save lives are themselves afforded meaningful recognition and protection under our Criminal Code. The Paramedic Chiefs of Canada stands ready to support your efforts, and we respectfully urge this bill's swift movement through Senate and House stages.

We thank you for your initiative and leadership, and we look forward to working collaboratively to see this bill succeed.

Yours sincerely,

Ryan Sneath



President

Paramedic Chiefs of Canada

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cc: PCC Board of Directors

[1]:

<https://www.paramedicchiefs.ca/docs/zerotolerance/PCC%20Violence%20Against%20Paramedics%20Position%20Statement.pdf>

[2]: <https://www.parl.ca/DocumentViewer/en/45-1/bill/S-233/first-reading> "Public Bill (Senate) S-233 (45-1) - First Reading - An Act to amend the Criminal Code (assault against persons who provide health services and first responders) - Parliament of Canada"