



Happy New Year everyone. I hope you had a good Christmas.

This is the time of new beginnings. The old year is past and a new one is ahead.

As you have seen in the Voice, I was invited by the Attorney General of Canada, Rob Nicholson to attend a press conference where he announced the introduction of a Bill to define White Collar crime and define penalties to persons convicted of it. The penalty of interest was a minimum sentence of two years in prison for fraud of one million dollars or more. As one person said to me most seniors don't have a million dollars to invest. This is true, however it should be noted that the minimum penalty provided in the bill does not refer to a single conviction but to accumulated losses and conviction of more crimes to a value of one or more million dollars.

In late November, I was invited to appear before the Standing Committee of Justice and Human Rights. This was after second reading of the Bill known as C52 and it is being considered in the Committee stage of progress through parliament. I had the opportunity to speak to the committee about concerns of seniors, the first of which was about restitution of their money.



If the victim wanted restitution (and who wouldn't) they had to fill out forms available on line, informing the judge of their intentions and some seniors do not have computers or are not very computer literate. My suggestion to the committee was that the restitution should automatically be part of the sentence of anyone convicted of Securities fraud or theft.

Since restitution presently has a limited time under the Criminal Code, I also suggested that it should be amended to apply restitution until all was repaid or the perpetrator was no longer living. The committee session ended at that time as the members were called to the house for a vote in parliament. There is also a Bill C53 from the Minister of Public Safety before parliament that has the potential to remove the automatic parole after serving 1/6 of the sentence for white collar crime. It is hoped that this year will bring these and many other benefits to seniors.

