



Policy Shifts

Canadian Legislative Changes Impacting Violence Against Women

January – December 2025

Note: While *Policy Shifts* is usually produced every six months, with the proroguing of government in January 2025 and the subsequent election, there was very little policy movement in the first six months of 2025. Therefore, this is a slightly longer edition encompassing all of 2025.

Legislation

National Legislative Changes Impacting Violence Against Women in Canada

- **Bill C-218 (An Act to amend the Criminal Code [medical assistance in dying])** indicates that a mental disorder is not a reason for which someone could access medical assistance in dying. Survivors of violence may experience increased mental health struggles and traumatic brain injury due to the abuse they endured. Passed first reading in the House of Commons. *Jun 2025*
- **Bill C-221 (An Act to amend the Corrections and Conditional Release Act [disclosure of information to victims])** discloses information to the victim of an offence regarding an offender's temporary release or parole. Passed first reading in the House of Commons. *Sept 2025*
- **Bill C-225 (An Act to amend the Criminal Code)** addresses intimate partner violence by creating specific offences and increasing detention periods. This includes the recognition of femicide and would make the killing of an intimate partner an automatic first-degree offence. Passed second reading in the House of Commons and referred to the Standing Committee on Justice and Human Rights. *Dec 2025*
- **Bill C-223 (An Act to amend the Divorce Act [Keeping Children Safe Act])** would ensure lawyers screen for signs of family violence, provide judges with the tools to recognize the impact of coercive control on children, ensure children's voices are heard, and prevent parenting

decisions from being influenced by myths or stereotypes about domestic violence.¹ Passed first reading in the House of Commons. *Sept 2025*

- **Bill C-235 (An Act to amend the Criminal Code [increasing parole ineligibility])** would extend parole ineligibility for individuals convicted of select crimes, including abduction, sexual assault, and murder. Passed first reading in the House of Commons. *Sept 2025*
- **Bill C-238 (An Act to amend the Criminal Code [restitution orders])** sets out certain types of restitution to be made to people who provide frontline services, including emergency and victim support services. Passed first reading in the House of Commons. *Sept 2025*
- **Bill C-246 (An Act to amend the Criminal Code [consecutive sentences for sexual offences])** would require sentences for sexual offences to be served consecutively. Passed first reading in the House of Commons. *Sept 2025*
- **Bill C-14 (An Act to amend the Criminal Code, the Youth Criminal Justice Act and the National Defence Act [bail and sentencing])** focused on stricter bail and sentencing for violent offenders. Passed second reading in the House of Commons and has been referred the Standing Committee on Justice and Human Rights. *Nov 2025*
- **Bill C-2 (An Act respecting certain measures relating to the security of the border between Canada and the United States and respecting other related security measures)** focused on amendments to the Customs Act, the Criminal Code, and the Mutual Legal Assistance in Criminal Matters Act. In addition to many amendments, this would broaden authorities' access to information and goods at the border. This would also include new grounds of ineligibility for refugee claims, including those fleeing gender-based violence. Passed first reading in the House of Commons. *Jun 2025*
- **Bill C-12 (An Act respecting certain measures relating to the security of Canada's borders and the integrity of the Canadian immigration system and respecting other related security measures)** maintains much of Bill C-2, including provisions related to immigration and border enforcement, yet has removed some of the

¹ National Association of Women and the Law. (2025) NAWL applauds new bill ending parental alienation accusations and protecting children from family violence. <https://nawl.ca/nawl-applauds-new-bill-ending-parental-alienation-accusations-and-protecting-children-from-family-violence>

more controversial elements, including privacy and data-sharing clauses. Passed first reading in the Senate. *Dec 2025*

- **Bill C-9 (An Act to amend the Criminal Code Commons [hate propaganda, hate crime and access to religious or cultural places])** would make it a crime to intimidate and obstruct those accessing places of worship, schools, and community spaces; make a hate crime a specific offence; and make it a crime to promote hate against an identifiable group by displaying terrorism or hate symbols in public. Hate crimes include crimes based on sex and gender. Passed second reading in the House of Commons and is under consideration in the Standing Committee on Justice and Human Rights. *Oct/Nov 2025*
- **Bill C-16 (An Act to amend certain Acts in relation to criminal and correctional matters [child protection, gender-based violence, delays and other measures])** creates an offence for engaging in a pattern of coercive conduct, and a charge of femicide would be created and would carry a charge of first-degree murder. The definition of the non-consensual distribution of intimate images would be expanded to include deepfakes and sextortion. Criminal harassment would be amended, including to capture tech-facilitated gender-based violence. Summary conviction for sexual assault would go from 18 months to 2 years, less a day. This would also include several changes that are aimed at protecting children from predators, particularly sextortion, sex tourism, and expanding child sexual offences. Finally, several amendments to victims' rights are proposed, along with changes to address court delays. Passed first reading in the House of Commons. *Dec 2025*
- **Bill S-209 (An Act to restrict young persons' online access to pornographic material)** would make it an offence for organizations to make pornographic materials available to young people on the internet. Passed second reading in the Senate and is under consideration in the Standing Committee on Legal and Constitutional Affairs. *June 2025*
- **Bill S-235 (An Act respecting the National Strategy to Combat Human Trafficking)** requires Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness to maintain and update the National Strategy to Combat Human Trafficking and address the harms caused by human trafficking. Passed first reading in the Senate. *Sept 2025*

Consultation

Parliamentary Standing Committee on the Status of Women

- [Section 810 of the Criminal Code and Women's Safety \(Peace Bonds\)](#). Started Oct 2025. *In process*
- [Gender-Based Violence and Femicides Against Women, Girls and Gender-Diverse People](#). Started Oct 2025. *In process*
- [Coercive Behaviour](#). Report presented Nov 2025
- [Antifeminist Ideology](#). Started Dec 2025. *In process*

Publications

Statistics Canada

- [Gender-related homicide of women and girls in Canada: Police contacts and sociodemographic characteristics of accused persons](#), Apr 2025
- [Police-reported crime statistics in Canada, 2024](#), Jul 2025
- [Trends in police-reported family violence and intimate partner violence in Canada, 2024](#), Oct 2025
- [Homicide trends in Canada, 2024 + Infographic](#), Dec 2025

Women's Shelters Canada

- [Building a National Narrative: A Select Review of Gender-Based Violence Policies, Legislation, and Services Across Canada](#), Feb 2025

British Columbia Independent Systemic Review

- [The British Columbia Legal System's Treatment of Intimate Partner Violence and Sexual Violence](#), Jun 2025

Office of the Federal Ombudsperson for Victims of Crime

- [Rethinking Justice for Survivors of Sexual Violence: A systemic investigation](#), Nov 2025

Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives

- [Alternative Federal Budget 2026](#), Oct 2025