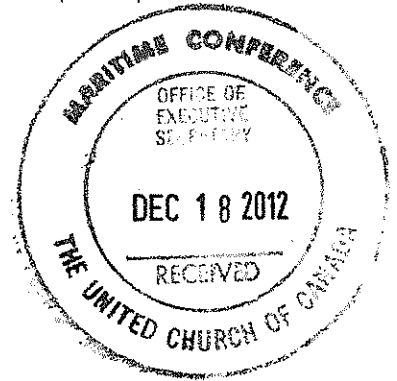


Minister of Public Safety



Ministre de la Sécurité publique

Ottawa, Canada K1A 0P8



DEC 13 2012

Mr. David Hewitt
Executive Secretary
The Maritime Conference of the United Church of Canada
Maritime Conference Office
21 Wright Street
Sackville, New Brunswick E4L 4P8

Dear Mr. Hewitt:

Thank you for your correspondence of November 13, 2012, regarding some recent changes following a review of Correctional Service of Canada's (CSC) delivery model for spiritual services for offenders incarcerated in the federal correctional system.

I appreciate the opportunity to correct the record. The assertion that we are eliminating all non-Christian chaplains was spurred on by a false and misleading report from the CBC. This report not only changed a quote issued by my office – it gave life to a series of stories from other outlets that were, consequently, also misleading.

The inaccurate media stories have left the unfortunate impression that our Government has changed its position when it comes to supporting freedom of religion for all Canadians.

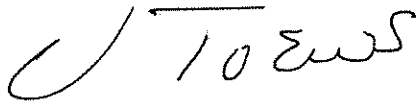
The only change that has been made is that our Government will no longer ask taxpayers to fund part-time advisors, a significant majority of whom, contrary to media reports, were Christian. Full-time advisors will continue to receive taxpayer funding, and those advisors can be of any faith. In addition to serving members of their own faith, the advisors will also make themselves available to provide spiritual advice to the general offender population. Volunteer advisors will continue to have the same access to CSC facilities they have always had. In fact, there are already 2,500 volunteers who provide these types of services.

Canada

CSC continues to work cooperatively with all faith communities to facilitate the rehabilitation of offenders. Despite misleading media reports, this cooperation and support continues.

Thank you for taking the time to write.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Vic Toews". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "V" and "T".

Vic Toews, P.C., Q.C., M.P.