OPEN LETTER TO THE RT. HON. PAUL MARTIN

It's time to protect children. It's time to remove the license to hit them.

November 20, 2005

Dear Prime Minister:


Article 19 of this Convention requires governments to protect children from all forms of physical or mental violence, injury or abuse.

But in Canada, section 43 of the Criminal Code still allows and even justifies teachers and parents hitting children for the purpose of “correction.”

This 19th century provision contradicts Canada’s commitment to the U.N. Convention. This fact has been made clear to you and your government by the U.N. Committee monitoring adherence to the Convention.

The Supreme Court of Canada has not resolved concerns about section 43 of the Criminal Code. The protection of children must start with repeal of what is, in effect, a legal license to hit them.

We, the undersigned, once again call on you to honour Canada’s obligation under the Convention on the Rights of the Child, and to:

• Repeal section 43 of the Criminal Code
• Recommend provincial Attorneys General develop guidelines to prevent unnecessary prosecutions
• Implement a national education campaign on positive discipline

For MP contacts or information on Section 43 of the Criminal Code and the U.N. Convention on the Rights of the Child, visit www.repeal43.org

For research on physical punishment, see the Joint Statement on Physical Punishment of Children and Youth at www.cheo.on.ca