

I am writing to share my concerns about the recently announced decision to eliminate all prison librarian positions at Correctional Services Canada (CSC) to save around \$2.4 million dollars. As some of the lowest-paid positions within CSC, these cuts are more about CSC's values than its economic position.

Reading has a critical impact on people in prisons' learning and healing, builds empathy, reduces feelings of isolation, improves literacy skills, and supports understanding the world in complex ways. Prison librarians help create a space for incarcerated people to access books in their institutions' libraries, and support them in their learning journeys.

Librarians and library professionals are able to teach sorely needed information and digital literacy skills that are crucial for anyone living in the 21st century. With the proliferation of misinformation online, it has never been more important for a librarian or trained library professional to help incarcerated people navigate resources. This decision will reduce access to the few information resources that exist within Canadian prisons and create more barriers for incarcerated people to reintegrate into the community upon release.

The cuts to prison librarians violates Rule 64 of the United Nations Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners, which says that 'Every prison shall have a library for the use of all categories of prisoners, adequately stocked with both recreational and instructional books, and prisoners shall be encouraged to make full use of it.'

Time and time again, people in prison have expressed that the support of librarians has played a crucial role in their rehabilitation. We urge you to reverse the cuts to the federal prison librarian positions and instead, to take real steps to bolster the prison libraries and improve the access of incarcerated people to information and opportunities for learning, growth and literacy skills development. Thank you for your attention to this matter.