



Pro Bono Law Saskatchewan



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Justice organizations call for end to use of the Wrap and restraint chairs in Saskatchewan

In recognition of Prisoner’s Justice Day on August 10th, 2023, the John Howard Society of Saskatchewan, the Elizabeth Fry Society of Saskatchewan, Pro Bono Law Saskatchewan and Community Legal Assistance Services for Saskatoon Inner City are calling on the Government of Saskatchewan to end use of the Wrap restraint device and restraint chairs on people in custody in the province. [A recent example of the Wrap’s use on a 15 year old boy in custody at Paul Dojack Youth Centre](#) highlights the trauma it can cause to those who go through the experience.

The organizations argue that continued use of the Wrap and restraint chairs device is inhumane. They believe there are better options to de-escalate volatile situations and prevent self-harm. Raising mental health care to an adequate standard, improving prison conditions, and using effective de-escalation strategies best serve the safety of both prisoners and prison staff.

The Wrap restraint device is used to prevent people from moving their arms or legs. Their legs and torso are strapped together and connected to a harness, while hands are handcuffed behind their back. This forces the individual in the restraint to sit forward in a 45 degree angle with little room to move. Similarly, restraint chairs immobilize arms and legs. Both are traumatizing and dehumanizing.

Saskatchewan, Manitoba and New Brunswick, are the only Canadian Provinces still allowing use of the Wrap restraint device on youth in custody.

“This device is essentially the equivalent to tying a person up with canvas straps, or using a straitjacket,” says Shawn Fraser, CEO at John Howard Society of Saskatchewan. "Its use causes more harm than good and should be stopped.”

“Many prisoners have serious histories of abuse and many have been subject to colonial and intergenerational violence,” says Chantelle Johnson, Executive Director at CLASSIC, “It is concerning that people with these histories are now being restrained in such a traumatizing way. It perpetuates cycles of harm and gets in the way of meaningful rehabilitation.”

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