



Carley's Law has critics in the House

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OTTAWA -- MPs from the Liberal party, Bloc and NDP said yesterday they are opposed to Carley's Law, which would toughen penalties for hit-and-run drivers.

All said in Parliament they had concerns about the Tory private member's bill named for Aldergrove teen Carley Regan, killed by a hit-and-run driver in 2003.

In arguing for the bill, Abbotsford Conservative MP Randy White referred to the death in Maple Ridge yesterday of a service-station attendant who was run over and dragged seven kilometres by a driver who stole \$12.30 in gas.

"This is happening every day," said White.

"We cannot come into the House of Commons and say that for one technical reason or another, we cannot do anything about it."

Tory MP Dick Harris of Cariboo-Prince George said the bill, which was in second reading yesterday, is "long overdue" and "sorely needed."

It would provide a minimum seven-year sentence for those convicted of hit-and-run causing death, and four years for hit-and-run causing bodily harm. Harris noted that perpetrators of both crimes rarely receive more than two years.

"It is a tragedy that the justice system has become so sick that people who commit violent crimes are simply not dealt with in a manner that is acceptable to our society," he said.

Earlier, Justice Minister Irwin Cotler told The Province he had reservations about criminal laws built around specific cases.

"I've always said we don't make laws by reason of individual cases however tragic those cases are," said Cotler.

White said he would try to change the views of the other parties.

"I see where they're coming from, which is basically that they don't want to do it," he said.

"My job is to put pressure on them so they want to do it."

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