



**Presentation to the Standing Committee  
on Justice Policy  
by the  
Police Association of Ontario**

**Bill 14, An Act to promote access to justice  
by amending or repealing various acts and  
by enacting the Legislation Act, 2005**

**September 14, 2006**

My name is Bruce Miller and I am the Chief Administrative Officer for the Police Association of Ontario (PAO). I was also a front-line police officer for over twenty years prior to taking on my current responsibilities.

The Police Association of Ontario is a professional organization representing over 30,000 police and civilian members from every municipal police association and the Ontario Provincial Police Association. The PAO is committed to promoting the interests of front-line police personnel, to upholding the honour of the police profession, and to elevating the standards of Ontario's police services. We have included further information on our organization in our brief.

The need for legislative change in the areas covered by Bill 14 has been a matter of discussion for a number of years by many interested groups. We appreciate the opportunity to provide input into this important process.

As you know the proposed legislation covers many areas, some of which are outside our area of expertise. We will be commenting on two specific sections:

1. Reforming the Justice of the Peace System.

2. The proposed amendment to the Provincial Offences Act that would permit witnesses to give evidence by video, audio or telephone conference, or other electronic means.

We would like to congratulate the government for moving forward with reforms to the Justice of the Peace system. As you know the proposed legislation would:

1. Establish minimum qualifications for Justices of the Peace requiring a university degree or community college diploma, or an equivalency, including life experience, and at least 10 years work experience. The PAO believes that adequate qualifications are critical to ensure the public's confidence in the system.
2. Establish a new Justices of the Peace Appointments Advisory Committee, making the appointment process more open and transparent, and incorporating community and regional input into the appointments process. This will also help to ensure that Ontarians continue to have confidence in the administration of justice.

3. Expand the powers of the Justices of the Peace Review Council to allow it to conduct hearings and make dispositions, including recommending removal, to the Attorney General. We believe that this would improve the Justice of the Peace complaints and discipline process, making it more effective. We believe that Justices of the Peace are an important part of Ontario's judicial system and as such, should be subject to greater oversight than currently exists. As a parallel, our Association is on record as supporting civilian oversight of policing. Police personnel are currently subject to rigorous public oversight. We have been and continue to be actively involved with government and other stakeholders in discussions on how to improve Ontario's police complaint system. As an Association committed to excellence in policing, we are always willing to participate in a process that ensures that all Ontarians have faith in their police service and the system of civilian oversight. The PAO believes that an effective and transparent public complaints system must satisfy reasonable members of both the public and police communities. We believe that these same principles should apply to Justices of the Peace and that the proposed changes should be implemented.

4. Allow retired justices of the peace to continue to serve on a per diem basis. There is a serious ongoing shortage of Justices of the Peace in the Province. This shortage has the potential to compromise community safety. Police officers often face unnecessary and lengthy delays in obtaining such things as search warrants. We believe that this provision would offer much greater flexibility in scheduling, particularly in those areas where there is very high volume and demand. A per diem Justice of the Peace would also be able to fill in to cover vacations, illnesses and parental and maternity leave where the local courts are not in a position to cover those vacancies.

We would also like to take the opportunity to comment on the proposed amendment to the Provincial Offences Act that would allow witnesses to give evidence by video, audio or telephone conference, or other electronic means. This would allow police officers to provide evidence from locations outside of court, allowing for a more efficient use of their time.

I think that everyone around this table understands the increasing demands that are being placed on police resources. Last November we released a public opinion poll that we commissioned across Ontario from Innovative Research Group. The complete poll is available on the PAO web site at [www.pao.on.ca](http://www.pao.on.ca) under "Media Releases". Some of the highlights include the following:

- Over half (51%) of Ontarians expect that they or a family member will have property stolen as a result of a break-in within the next five years.
- More Ontario residents than a year and one-half ago feel they or a family member will be physically attacked in the next five years, up 6 points to 32% from a year earlier.
- An overwhelming majority (80%) says that gun violence has worsened in the past five years.
- Almost three in five Ontarians (57%) believe that community crime has increased over the past five years.

The PAO will be appearing before the Federal Standing Committee on Finance in the next few weeks to urge the Federal Government to move forward with their commitment to put at least 2,500 more police officers on the beat in our cities and communities and that sufficient funds should be budgeted for that purpose. We believe that Ontario should be given its fair share of the funding for new officers based on its population base and that those officers must be distributed to the Ontario Provincial Police and to Ontario's municipal police services.

Certainly the use of video conferencing for officers testifying is a step in the right direction and will help to free up valuable resources. We note that the complexities of this issue will be covered in regulations and would offer our assistance in developing these with other concerned stakeholders.

In closing we would like to reiterate our support for the legislative changes that we have highlighted and would ask for your support on these issues. We would like to thank the members of the Standing Committee for the opportunity to appear before you once again and for your continued support for safer communities. We would be pleased to answer any questions that you may have.



## **Mandate of the Association**

The Police Association of Ontario (PAO) was founded in 1933 and is the official voice and representative body for Ontario's front-line police personnel. Our membership consists of 30,000 police and civilian members from every municipal police association and the Ontario Provincial Police Association (see attached for a complete listing of member associations).

The Police Association of Ontario promotes the mutual interests of Ontario's front-line police personnel in order to uphold the honour of the police profession and elevate the standards of police services.

The core objectives of our Association are to:

- Provide progressive and effective leadership and representation on policing issues;
- Deliver flexible and innovative services providing resource and support to our member associations;
- Deliver training and educational programs to foster enhanced association leadership; and,
- Encourage cooperation and unity within our membership.

## **Community Service**

The Police Association of Ontario and its affiliates across this province have a long history of community support and involvement. Whether through the work of our individual members or through the efforts of a local association, many charities, minor sports programs and assistance programs for people of all ages, have benefited from our efforts.

The PAO believes that our "Kids and Cops and Canadian Tire Fishing Days" is another example of this community spirit. We have partnered with Fishing Forever, a non-profit organization, whose principal focus is recreational fisheries conservation and securing the future of fishing in Ontario. The PAO has committed over two hundred thousand dollars to this program over the last several years and to date have taken thousands of young people fishing for the day with police personnel. The PAO was honoured last year with the Rick Amsbury Memorial Award for its contribution to fishing and youth in Ontario.



## **Sharing Our Expertise**

Our unified voice has always been a key resource to government on all matters related to policing. Building on our shared goal of making Ontario communities safer, we have worked with successive governments on a number of important policy files sharing our experience and expertise.

Notable amongst our past achievements is the revitalized Police Services Act. Our Association worked along side other police stakeholders including representatives of Ontario's Chiefs of Police, Police Service Boards and municipalities to forge a consensus on how best to transform Ontario's police services. Working with elected members on all sides of the Legislature on this important initiative was particularly rewarding.

In recent years, our Association has been advocating for a number of new initiatives that would improve community safety and protect police personnel including:

- ❑ Measures to address the escalating problem of violence in our communities posed by gangs, drugs and guns in particular;
- ❑ Implementation plans for the 1,000 new officers;
- ❑ Revitalizing the Ontario Municipal Employees Retirement System (OMERS) to better reflect the contribution of police and fire fighter personnel.
- ❑ Passage of the "pull to the left" law that requires vehicles to slow and pull to the left when approaching a stopped emergency vehicle.

## **Moving Forward: Developing The Work Plan**

While proud of our past accomplishments, we understand that police services are constantly in transition. By responding to changing public expectations, we can ensure that Ontario's police services remain responsive, effective and accountable. At present, we are anxious to work with government on a number of important policy matters including:

- ❑ Maintaining Ontario's strong system of civilian oversight.
- ❑ Improve pension portability for police personnel through a divestment agreement with the Ontario Pension Board and OMERS.
- ❑ Standardizing Ontario's usage of private security personnel.
- ❑ Improving Bill 105 regulations (The Blood Samples Act) to ensure officer and community safety.



**PAO Member Associations**

Amherstburg	Kingston	Sarnia
Aylmer	Kirkland Lake	Saugeen Shores
Barrie	LaSalle	Sault Ste. Marie
Belleville	Leamington	Shelburne
Brantford	Lindsay	Smiths Falls
Brockville	London	South Simcoe
Chatham-Kent	Michipicoten Twp.	St. Thomas
Cobourg	Midland	Stratford
Cornwall	Niagara Parks	Strathroy
Deep River	Niagara Region	Stirling-Rawdon
Dryden	North Bay	Sudbury
Durham Regional	Ontario Provincial Police	Temiskaming Shores
Elliot Lake	Orangeville	Thunder Bay
Espanola	Orillia	Timmins
Essex	Ottawa	Toronto
Gananoque	Owen Sound	Waterloo Regional
Guelph	Oxford Community	West Grey
Halton Regional	Peel Regional	West Nipissing
Hamilton	Pembroke	Windsor
Hanover	Perth	Wingham
Kenora	Peterborough-Lakefield	York Regional
	Port Hope	

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## The Police Association of Ontario – a Resource for Government

The PAO has a history of working with government to ensure safe communities. Our unified voice has always been a key resource to government on all matters related to policing. The PAO web site is located at [www.pao.on.ca](http://www.pao.on.ca). It contains all of our media releases, position papers and other information on policing and community safety. We would also encourage you to contact our office should you need any further information.

Some of the material includes:

- ❑ Presentation to the Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs on Bill 40, The Emergency Service Provider's Insurance Protection Act.
- ❑ PAO position paper on the need to reform Bill 105 (the Blood Samples Act).
- ❑ Public opinion polling information on community safety issues.
- ❑ Presentation to the Standing Committee on Bill 96, An Act to Amend the Liquor Licence Act, 2004.
- ❑ Presentation to the Standing Committee on Justice Policy by the Police Association of Ontario on the Review of the Emergency Management Statutes.
- ❑ Presentation to the Standing Committee on the Legislative Assembly on Bill 132, An Act to amend the Dog Owners' Liability Act to increase public safety in relation to dogs, including pit bulls, and to make related amendments to the Animals for Research Act.
- ❑ Submissions to the Honourable Patrick LeSage, Q.C., The Police Complaints Review.
- ❑ Presentation to the Standing Committee on Justice Policy on Bill 110, An Act to require the disclosure of information to police respecting persons being treated for gunshot wounds.
- ❑ Presentation to the Standing Committee on Justice Policy, Bill 128, Law Enforcement and Forfeited Property Management Statute Law Amendment Act, 2005.
- ❑ Presentation to the Standing Committee on Justice Policy, Bill 159, An Act to revise the Private Investigators and Security Guards Act and to make a consequential amendment to the Licence Appeal Tribunal Act, 1999.
- ❑ Presentation to the Standing Committee on General Government on Bill 206, An Act to revise the Ontario Municipal Employees Retirement System Act
- ❑ Presentation to the Standing Committee on General Government on Bill 56, An Act to amend the Emergency Management Act, the Employment Standards Act, 2000 and the Workplace Safety and Insurance Act, 1997
- ❑ Presentation to the Standing Committee on Justice Policy on Bill 107, An Act to Amend the Human Rights Code