

**ONLY 13% OF ONTARIANS SUPPORT PRIVATIZING POLICE SERVICES: SURVEY**  
***72% say Public Safety is More Important Than AMO Proposed Cost-Saving Measures***

Mississauga, ON - As the Association of Municipalities of Ontario (AMO) gets ready to welcome provincial and municipal politicians and delegates to their Niagara Falls annual conference this weekend, a new Police Association of Ontario (PAO) survey of 1,310 people indicates AMO's push for privatizing police services is not acceptable to Ontarians.

"The reality is that AMO's push to privatize police services and any government supporting this direction is not aligning with the views of Ontarians," says PAO Executive Director, Stephen Reid. "Over 70% of those strongly opposed to AMO's push for outsourcing believe private security guards compromise public safety and 63% believe private security guards are not equipped to deal with benign or perceived non-threatening calls that have the potential for violence. Of those strongly opposed to this idea, a whopping 93% are likely to be active and vocal to this issue."

Reid said the online survey indicated Ontarians are very skeptical and uncomfortable with the idea that a for-profit private security firm would safeguard privacy if they had to respond to a call about investigating credit card fraud, break-ins, robbery or sexual assault for example.

"What this survey indicates is that Ontarians don't buy AMO's argument of saving taxpayers money as a good enough reason to replace the police officer as the first line of public safety," says PAO President Bruce Chapman. "In addition to responding to calls and preventing crime, a police officer's role has evolved significantly over the years to accommodate more mental health-related incidents as a result of decades of healthcare cuts – a level of complexity that will require a police presence in the majority of those circumstances."

Municipal politicians should also be aware that when the question was asked if elected leaders want to consider this type of cost-savings – 46% said they should seek a mandate before cutting police services, 36% said they are unsure or it doesn't matter, and only 18% per cent said they should be able to do so without seeking a mandate.

"The question is – do you really want to call 911 to report a prowler on your property – who may or may not have a criminal history and have a security guard show up?" says Reid. "Right now, every demographic and socio-economic background surveyed including senior citizens and parents are just not buying the argument low crime rates means municipalities can now lay-off police officers and privatize services."

-30-

**CONTACTS:**

Bruce Chapman  
PAO President  
Cell: 905-599-4813

Stephen Reid  
Executive Director  
Cell: 416-435-4455

## **Backgrounder**

Sample size: 1,310 all over Ontario

Extracted Questions:

*How much do you support or oppose the idea of outsourcing some police services in Ontario?*

Strongly opposed	50%
Don't Know	37%
Strongly support	13%

Percentage of those that agree with the following statements:

*I would be concerned if private security companies had access to my personal information.*

74%	agree
23%	don't know
4%	disagree

*Public safety is more important than cost saving measures.*

72%	agree
25%	don't know
2%	disagree

*Private security companies are less equipped to deal with mental health issues and potential escalation of violence than the police are.*

61%	agree
33%	don't know
6%	disagree

Due to rounding of numbers, totals may not be exactly 100%