



For Immediate Release

Value for Money – The Real Issue

The Police Association of Ontario calls for time to find real solutions.

(Mississauga) - The Police Association of Ontario is calling for a real examination of policing costs to ensure value for money for the taxpayers of Ontario. Along with its partners in policing, the PAO has been advocating for efficiencies to keep policing costs in line with the expectations of the community. “While the public discussion of late has revolved around wage freezes in the public sector, we are looking for more sustainable and meaningful efficiencies. In other words, true value for money,” says PAO President Dave McFadden.

The PAO is working with the provincial government and other agencies to find ways to ensure that the public has what it wants – which is to have quick response to their calls for police help, while maintaining sustainable budgets.

“All costs have risen over the decades however, proportionally speaking, policing costs have not increased inappropriately. The fact is that crime rates are down and that is in large part due to the professional policing that makes our communities safe and desirable places in which to live and work,” McFadden points out.

Key areas to focus on when looking for efficiencies include the increased demands on officers to file reports and documentation, and the use of police officers as social workers and therapists. While both reporting and social work are part of an officer’s job, far too often now front line police officers are spending many hours in the station filling out reports, instead of being available to respond to calls. More and more, police are becoming the agency where people turn as a last resort when they need any kind of assistance. Police are often called to handle situations involving mental health issues, which is the expertise of the medical and social services sectors.

We believe there are ways of addressing these issues that will keep front line officers ready to respond. Policing has changed, along with the world, especially in the last decade since 9-11. There is a need to examine what we do and how we do it, and ensure we’re delivering the best service to our communities. Time is needed to examine how legislation, court decisions and submissions, reporting, regulations, and major international terrorist and crime issues, social services and medical supports, have affected front-line policing. There are also potential savings through

streamlining processes and improvements in technology. The goal is to make front line police officers readily available when they're needed – because that's what citizens want and expect.

Police officers put their lives on the line every day. They need special training to handle the volatile and unpredictable situations they face - 24/7. And, it takes a special kind of fortitude. “It helps when the people who need us to be there for them, are there for us, too. We know that when the public calls the police for help, they want the fastest possible response. So do we,” says McFadden. “Public safety and police safety are our top concerns. Police pay taxes, too, and we want value for money, too. And we know that putting front line officers where they're needed most, doing the jobs they are trained to do, is the answer.”

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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 over 33,000 police and civilian members from every municipal police association and the Ontario Provincial Police Association.

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.