



**Presentation to the:
House of Commons Standing Committee on Finance
by the
Police Association of Ontario**

2011 Pre-Budget Consultations

Executive Summary

The Police Association of Ontario (PAO) is a professional organization representing over 33,000 police and civilian members from every Ontario municipal police association and the Ontario Provincial Police Association. The PAO has a history of working with government and community partners to ensure safe communities.

Safe communities create trust, comfort, attract investment and are key to ensuring Canada's place in a competitive world. Canadians have a right to feel safe in their homes, on their streets, while at play and in their schools. Law enforcement personnel require sufficient operating and training resources in order ensure safe communities.

An investment in law enforcement is an investment in a stronger Canada. Therefore, the PAO urges the Government of Canada to build upon the momentum created by its recent legislative changes and the foundation of the Police Officers Recruitment Fund and commit to providing long-term, sustainable funding for community policing. An investment in law enforcement is an investment in a stronger Canada.

Ensuring Safe Communities

The Police Association of Ontario (PAO) is a professional organization representing 33,000 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.

Our unified voice has always been a key resource to government on all matters related to policing. Building on our shared goal of making communities safer, we have worked with successive governments on a number of important policy files sharing our experience and expertise. We appreciate the opportunity to provide input into this important process. We would like to focus our attention on the important link between ensuring Canada's place in a competitive world and safe communities.

Canadians have a right to feel safe in their homes, on their streets, while at play and in their schools. Safe communities create trust and comfort and attract investment. They can only lead to a stronger Canada. While appreciative that there are many demands for funding, the PAO believes that safe communities are a priority for the citizens that we serve.

Policing is dependant on professionally trained personnel. This is reflected by the fact that staffing accounts for approximately 90% of the costs in the operating budgets of police services across the province. In Ontario, these costs are borne by municipalities and the province. It has been our experience that for many reasons, municipalities are constantly looking at ways to reduce the budgets of police services; a pressure that no doubt will continue to increase given the current environment of significant budget deficits. Meeting taxpayer expectations for high quality, professional policing is compromised by these budget restraints and cutbacks. We simply cannot continue to provide the level of policing that people expect and demand within the current staff complement.

Crime is becoming more sophisticated, organized and technically complex. Criminals are using cutting-edge technology and the police are hard pressed to keep pace. Criminal

organizations do not face the budgetary restrictions that are faced by police agencies, which may prohibit or delay the acquisition of equipment or personnel. Often investigations into these matters are very time and resource consuming. We are playing catch-up to the criminal in many instances.

Terrorism and cyber threats have also had a significant impact on law enforcement personnel, particularly, as it relates to the complexity of the types of cases and the amount of resources that are necessary to investigate. In order to effectively respond to these types of sophisticated, high-tech threats, police officers must have the adequate equipment, training and personnel resources. Police resources are stretched to the breaking point, responding to everyday calls. High-profile, high-risk arrests and court proceedings also claim large shares of policing budgets to provide trial security and prisoner transfers. Additionally, any special task force while useful for its specific purpose, is not specially funded. It draws resources, both human and financial from the day to day work which still needs to get done.

The effects of budget constraint are felt in every aspect of policing, from training to occupational health and safety, and are intensified by rising costs and expectations. Fiscal pressures appear to have the greatest impact on general patrol officers. As the specialization of policing tasks increases, resources are drawn from the patrol units. This places increased pressure on the remaining front-line personnel, contributing to stress and morale issues. It may also compromise the ability of police services to meet public expectations and internal service level standards.

The Government of Canada has moved forward with a number of important community safety issues. Budget 2008 provided the Provinces with resources for recruitment under the Police Officers Recruitment Fund and the Government has taken on a number of much needed steps to ensure an effective justice system and reduce crime by means of deterrence. The bottom line, however, is that community safety depends on an effective judicial system coupled with adequate levels of professionally trained and resourced police personnel.

Legislative changes adopted by Parliament over the past few years significantly improved the array of tools police officers have at their disposal to maintain law and order. While the range of duties officers are expected to provide has expanded, unfortunately, the increase in the number of police officers has not kept pace with the rate of population growth over most of the last decade. In their most recent publication, Statistics Canada reported that the number of Canadian police officers per 100,000 population had increased steadily during the 1960s and early 1970s, peaking at 206 police officers per 100,000 population in 1975. Between 1975 and 1991, the number of police officers grew at about the same pace as the Canadian population, maintaining an average of around 200 police officers per 100,000 residents. The latest figures show that number had dropped to 195 police officers per 100,000 residents.

Recommendation:

Police personnel are vitally important in the effort to keep Ontario's streets safe. In order to maintain this level of safety, police services must continue to be adequately staffed, trained, equipped and funded. Thus, the PAO urges the Government of Canada to build on the momentum created by its legislative changes and the foundation of the Police Officers Recruitment Fund, and commit to providing long-term, sustainable funding for community policing. An investment in law enforcement is an investment in a stronger Canada.

We appreciate the opportunity to participate in the Pre-Budget Consultations and would be pleased to meet and work with the Government at any time to look at other initiatives to meet our joint goal of improving community safety in Ontario and the rest of the country.

Contact Information

Ron Middel, Chief Administrative Officer

Police Association of Ontario
6730 Davand Drive, Unit 1
Mississauga, Ontario
L5T 2K8

Bus: 905.670.9770
Fax: 905.670.9755
Email: pao@pao.ca