



NEWS RELEASE

Toronto Police Association Presents at the Government of Ontario's Standing Committee on Justice Policy

Toronto, ON, May 16, 2023 – On Tuesday, May 16, 2023, the Toronto Police Association (TPA) joined other police leaders in presenting submissions to the government's Standing Committee on Justice Policy.

The Committee has been tasked with considering Bill 102, the Strengthening Safety and Modernizing Justice Act, which includes among other things, transforming policing and other community safety and justice legislation, freeing up court resources for more serious and backlogged cases, and exploring future policy opportunities to respond to current and emerging challenges, resulting in improvements to public safety and public confidence in the justice system.

On behalf of the almost 8,000 members the TPA represents, the submission to the Committee covered the following:

- Support for language that allows for the Inspector General to make an order requiring a police services board or Commissioner to ensure adequate and effective policing is provided for;
- A call for further engagement on the definition of adequate and effective policing;
- Allowing for the inspector general to consider "lesser measures" for non-compliance with the act and a call to have this principle of restraint extended to frontline police officers; and
- Support for the removal of barriers that may prevent good candidates from joining the police service.

"The reality is, in order to provide adequate and effective policing, we need adequate and effective staffing. I would go so far as to use the word crisis when it comes to discussing police staffing levels," said Jon Reid, President of the Toronto Police Association. "Using Toronto as an example, we have fewer officers today than we did years ago, yet our population has seen a steady increase, leading to a major deficit of boots on the ground. Any efforts to alleviate pressures by attracting people to this noble profession are welcome."

A full version of the submission by the Toronto Police Association can be read below.



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The Toronto Police Association represents almost 8,000 police and civilian members of the Toronto Police Service. We are a professional organization dedicated to advancing the interests of our members through education, political action, and legislative advocacy. We operate in an open, ethical, and professional manner and strive to promote professionalism and accountability within the ranks of our members. Our foremost priority is the wellbeing of our members and the community we serve.

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Submissions to the Standing Committee on Justice Policy

**President Jon Reid
Toronto Police Association
May 16, 2023
*Check Against Delivery***

- Good afternoon Chair, Vice-Chair, members of the standing committee, legislative staff and, of course, my colleagues also appearing before you this week.
- Thank you for having me here today.
- My name is Jon Reid and I am President of the Toronto Police Association.
- The TPA has both the responsibility and privilege of being the voice of Toronto's policing family.
- The TPA represents the approximately 8,000 members of the Toronto Police Service who dutifully serve Toronto's residents in both sworn and civilian capacities.
- I often start any public discussion with a reminder to those I'm appearing before that our police members give up certain rights when they carry that badge or wear that uniform – sworn and civilian alike.
- They cannot speak on matters publicly. They must remain impartial in the execution of their duties... duties they execute devotedly day in and day out... often facing peril and undeserved criticism.
- But this isn't the only burden our policing family faces.
- I would be remiss in not taking a moment to honour the lives and sacrifices made by all the members we have lost in the line of duty in very recent history.
- Just last week Sergeant Mueller of the OPP had his life taken from him in the line of duty. It is yet another stark reminder of the ultimate sacrifice police officers can make in service of others.
- On behalf of the TPA and its 8000 members I offer Sgt. Mueller's family, friends, and colleagues our sincerest condolences.



- Collaborative work on the Community Safety and Policing Act has been something the TPA – along with our other Association partners – has been actively involved in since inception.
- With that said, the TPA is generally supportive of the technical amendments put forth in Bill 102.
- The last time I appeared before this committee, which was on the issue of bail reform, I stressed the importance of adequate and effective policing.
- Specifically, I stressed the value in defining it well and having the oversight mechanisms in place to ensure it is followed by those trusted with the responsibility of employing and overseeing our police services.
- The language amendments in relation to the powers of the Inspector General are a welcome change contained within the bill.
- Stipulating, specifically within s. 20(1), that the Inspector General may make an order requiring a police service board or Commissioner to ensure adequate and effective policing is provided, sends a message that accountability for policing is held at all levels.
- That accountability is not just on the backs of our front-line members, who often are working within the confines and limitations of the environment provided to them by police service boards and/or the chief.
- But, again, I stress the need for continued engagement in crafting a definition of adequate and effective policing that ensures we set our inspector general up for success in that oversight role. Anything less would be a disservice to our members and our communities.
- Continuing with reference to the Inspector General the act goes on, within s. 126, to detail the different powers and orders available to the Inspector General when dealing with non-compliance with the act or regulations.
- A proposed amendment within Bill 102 is the “consideration of lesser measures” inserted at s. 126(1.1) – which reads in part that... The Inspector General shall consider whether any lesser measure available in the circumstances would remedy the non-compliance.
- Essentially this codifies what is known as the principle of restraint.



- If this is the approach taken for those on a police services Board or in position of Chief when found to be in non-compliance, I would expect the same principle to apply in the oversight of our front-line members who find themselves subject to oversight bodies as well.
- This is especially true when we have police services that are overburdened and severely understaffed.
- It is well known that police recruiting numbers are dwindling, and staffing numbers have not kept pace with the policing needs of our communities.
- The reality is...in order to provide adequate and effective policing, we need adequate and effective staffing.
- Using Toronto as an example, we have fewer officers today than we did years ago... yet our population has seen a steady increase, leading to a major deficit of boots on the ground
- I would go so far as to use the word **crisis** when it comes to discussing police staffing levels.
- Therefore, any efforts to alleviate pressures by attracting people to this noble profession are welcome.
- The amendment within the bill to maintain a minimum education requirement of a secondary school diploma or equivalent is a welcome change.
- We want our police officers to be of good moral character. We also want them to be representative of the communities we ask them to serve.
- We want them to have life experience, but life experience doesn't only come in the form of a classroom.
- Systemic barriers to entering policing should be minimized, and this amendment does just that. Policing is specialized...and as such police training – once a member is hired should be where the focus lies.
- Let's open the door as wide as possible to the best recruits, and then train them well with the skills they will need.
- I believe that this is a great initiative from the Provincial government – and it should not be mistaken for diminishing training requirements. Currently,



under the Police Services Act, the requirement is the same as that being proposed in Bill 102.

- Like the Police College tuition fee waiver announcement made by the Premier and Solicitor General a few weeks ago, removing the post-secondary education requirement eliminates a systemic barrier to entry into the profession.
- These barriers would have most affected historically disadvantaged groups who may not have had the same opportunities or financial means to pursue a degree. We do not want to create barriers to shut out excellent candidates with diverse backgrounds.
- Committee members, I am cognizant of my time limits. The TPA will continue to engage with this committee and the rest of government on these important issues.
- I thank you for your time today and welcome any questions you may have.

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