

For Immediate Release
December 8, 2006

MCGUINTY GOVERNMENT RELEASES REPORT OF THE HATE CRIMES COMMUNITY WORKING GROUP

Provides Recommendations On Fighting Hate Crimes And Strengthening Communities

TORONTO — The McGuinty government is marking International Human Rights Day by releasing the report of the Hate Crimes Community Working Group, Attorney General Michael Bryant and Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services Monte Kwinter announced today.

“Our society has zero tolerance for hate crimes, so I thank the chair and members of the working group for their thoughtful proposals,” said Bryant. “Our government is committed to maintaining its leadership role in promoting human rights, equality, diversity and tolerance. I will also work with the federal government to consider those recommendations that fall within its jurisdiction.”

Bryant said that the Ontario government is striking an inter-ministerial team to consider those recommendations that fall within its jurisdiction and to plan the investment of \$1.3 million to help strengthen Ontario’s communities by taking action against hate crimes.

“I offer my congratulations to members of the working group, who have given so freely of their time and contributed their depth of understanding of Ontario’s diverse communities to completing this report,” said Kwinter. “The government looks forward to working with community groups and stakeholders to better protect Ontarians and to prevent future hate crimes.”

The Hate Crimes Community Working Group began its deliberations in January 2006 and met with stakeholders in Toronto, Windsor, Ottawa, Thunder Bay and Kenora. More than 600 Ontarians provided input. The working group reviewed best practices in other provinces and countries and conducted an on-line questionnaire to gather stakeholder views on hate crime issues, incidents and victimization. The group provided recommendations on ways to improve services for victims of hate crimes and to prevent further victimization.

“I was honoured to have been asked to chair the working group on this very important and timely issue,” said Dr. Karen Mock. “It has been a privilege to work with such a dedicated group of individuals representing diverse communities, and to be able to reach out to so many communities and stakeholders across the province. Many communities look forward to continuing to work with the government to implement a strategy to counter and prevent hate crime in Ontario.”

International Human Rights Day, December 10, is celebrated around the world, commemorating the 1948 adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights by the General Assembly of the United Nations. This declaration affirms the human rights of people everywhere – the right to be treated with dignity, the right to freedom of religion and expression, the right to equality before the law and to protection from discrimination.

The McGuinty government has taken other significant steps to combat hate crimes, including:

- Expanding the categories of projects eligible for funding under the Community Grant Program to include community-based projects that support victims of hate crimes
- Providing specialized training in hate crimes legislation for a team of Crown counsel that provides legal advice to police and other Crown prosecutors on matters related to hate crimes
- Updating the Crown prosecution policy on hate crimes to ensure that it reflects legal developments and addresses the current social environment relating to hate activities.

- 30 -

Contacts:

Greg Crone
Ministry of the Attorney General
Minister Bryant's Office
(416) 326-1785

Brendan Crawley
Ministry of the Attorney General
Communications Branch
(416) 326-2210

Annette Phillips
Ministry of Community Safety
and Correctional Services
Minister Kwinter's Office
(416) 326-8265

Anthony Brown
Ministry of Community Safety
and Correctional Services
Communications Branch
(416) 314-7772

Disponible en français

www.attorneygeneral.jus.gov.on.ca
www.mpss.jus.gov.on.ca