

A UNITED FRONT TO COMBAT CRIME

November 26, 2008

The McGuinty government and its justice partners, including police leaders, are working to keep Ontarians safe by forming a united front to combat violence, including violence perpetrated by repeat offenders. This partnership is already yielding results.

FIGHTING REPEAT VIOLENT CRIME

Justice on Target – Under this strategy, Ontario is setting targets to reduce court delays and appearances by 30 per cent over the next four years. It will accelerate the pace of justice and hold offenders accountable by:

- Focusing justice system resources on the most serious and violent cases, particularly those involving repeat, violent offenders
- Minimizing the risk of charges being stayed due to delay
- Reducing the time spent by police officers in court and increasing their time on the streets, keeping our communities safe.

The Ontario Courts of Justice in Newmarket, North York and London have been chosen to begin this effort. Multi-disciplinary teams, led by a Judge and a Regional Senior Crown, are moving into each of these courthouses to quickly identify, test and implement new ideas that will achieve faster justice. The teams will directly engage local Judges, Justices of the Peace, Crown Attorneys, Defence Counsel, police, corrections and court staff, Legal Aid Ontario and other local justice sector participants. Progress in each courthouse will be measured and reported online.

More Charges, Less Crime – While Ontario's crime rate was the lowest in Canada last year, dropping 18 per cent, including a 17 per cent reduction in violent crime from 2000 to 2007; over the same period, the number of criminal charges laid by Ontario's police increased by 20 per cent from 500,207 to 599,586.

Ontario police have worked hard to crack down on bail violators, resulting in a nearly 19 per cent increase in the number of people charged since 2003. According to Statistics Canada, 33,800 people were charged with violating bail conditions in 2007, up from 28,369 in 2003.

Long-term and Dangerous Offender Crowns – To protect Ontario families from long-term and dangerous offenders, the McGuinty government has:

- Created six specialized regional teams to advise police during investigations and enhance the prosecution and management of dangerous and long-term offenders;
- Stepped up efforts to monitor repeat offenders in the community upon completion of their sentences and notifying victims of their release;
- Continued to work with the federal government, along with the other provinces and territories, to strengthen the provisions of the Criminal Code relating to high risk offenders, as well as the national sex offender registry.

Tough New Laws – Ontario successfully advocated for federal changes to allow for a rehearing of a dangerous offender application where a person on a long-term supervision order breaches a condition of that order. As well, components of recently passed federal legislation (Bill C-2)

stem directly from Ontario's recommendations. The new laws increase the duration of recognizance orders for those who have completed their sentences but continue to pose a danger to the public.

FIGHTING GUN AND GANG VIOLENCE

Guns and Gangs Task Force – Since 2005, the McGuinty government has expanded the task force to include a total of 72 Crown prosecutors working with police to investigate and prosecute gun violence at street level. This includes specially-trained Crown prosecutors deployed to the province's six regions to work full-time as a resource to police and prosecutors on gun violence matters.

The task force includes police officers, Crown prosecutors, probation and parole officers, corrections staff and staff from the Victim/Witness Assistance Program who work together from the first day of an investigation. To date, Guns and Gangs Task Force Crowns have been involved in nine major crime prosecutions involving over 400 arrests and over 3,000 charges laid.

Provincial Operations Centre – The government established a world class, state-of-the-art operations centre that better allows for highly coordinated investigations and prosecutions of gun and gang-related offences.

Funding for Policing in High-Priority Areas – Since January 2006, Ontario has provided \$17 million to the Toronto Police Service to support its offensive against gangs in high-priority areas of the city. This effort included surveillance cameras in high-risk areas and the establishment of the Toronto Anti-Violence Intervention Strategy – three rapid response teams each consisting of 18 highly trained police officers, specializing in drugs and guns interdiction. These officers also make community contacts to get at-risk neighbourhoods on the right track.

As of October 31, 2008, the Toronto Police Service had seen tremendous results, including close to 13,000 arrests, the seizure of more than 600 firearms and more than 68,300 business and nearly 141,000 community contacts.

Expanded Guns and Gangs and Anti-Violence Intervention Program – On June 6, 2007, the Premier announced \$12 million to further combat guns and gangs, organized crime and illegal drugs in Ontario, including \$6.3 million to expand the guns and gangs anti-violence intervention program to 15 additional communities.

Need for Federal Action Against Gun Crime – Ontario led the charge for tougher gun laws, including increased mandatory minimums and reverse onus bail for gun crimes. Now that the federal parliament has responded with the passage of Bill C-2, Ontario is calling on the federal government to get more involved in fighting gun crime through:

- Tougher laws, including a handgun ban
- Full, permanent federal funding of the 2,500 additional police officers promised nationwide
- Improving and implementing tougher firearms marking regulations
- Increased anti-gun smuggling security at the Canada-US border
- Assigning federal prosecutors, who have expertise in drug prosecutions, to the Guns and Gangs Task Force and Operations Centre.

WORKING WITH OUR POLICE PARTNERS

Safer Communities – 1,000 Officers Partnership Program – Through this \$37.1million program, 1,000 more police officers, including 250 in Toronto, are fighting crime in communities across Ontario. Half of the new officers are assigned to community policing, including school visits,

street patrols and increased traffic enforcement. The remaining 500 officers are assigned duties related to six priority areas: guns and gangs, youth crime, organized crime and marijuana grow operations, dangerous offenders, domestic violence and protecting children from Internet luring and child pornography.

Permanent funding of the \$30.7million **Community Policing Partnerships Program**, which provides an additional 1,000 officers, means the government is investing \$68 million in over 2,000 additional officers in communities across Ontario.

More OPP Officers – In July 2007 the government announced that 200 additional officers – the largest increase in OPP officer strength in well over a decade – will be assigned to a number of priority areas to target criminal activity and protect Ontario citizens.

Police Officers Recruitment Fund – In 2006, the Federal government pledged to put 2500 new officers on Canadian streets. Instead, through the Federal Police Officer Recruitment Fund, Ontario received 30 per cent of the original commitment. The province will receive \$156 million in federal funding over five years to hire 329 police officers. We continue to lobby the Federal government to meet its original commitment.

Enhanced Border Enforcement – Ontario is enhancing its ability to address gun and drug smuggling and other organized crime activities at its borders with the formation of the Provincial Organized Crime Enforcement Team – 33 OPP officers who work jointly with Canadian and American law enforcement partners in border communities across the province.

The OPP also participates in International Border Enforcement Teams that target cross-border criminal activity. These are multi-agency law enforcement teams, led by the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, which take a coordinated approach to target cross-border criminal activity.

TACKLING THE ROOTS OF VIOLENCE

Tough on the Causes of Crime – The McGuinty government has invested in community partnerships such as the Youth in Policing Initiative, the School-based Prevention/Diversion Program and the Youth Challenge Fund. These programs are helping to put at-risk neighbourhoods on the right track.

Youth Justice Committees – The government's Youth Justice Committee program is an alternative to the formal court process that holds young offenders who commit low risk offences accountable and addresses issues that may lead to re-offending. The government has expanded the program three times since 2004, to 54 communities across the province - one for every court jurisdiction. More than 80 per cent of the participants have had no further contact with the justice system within one year of completion.

In the past fiscal year, police and Crown attorneys have together referred more than 3,100 youth between the ages of 12 and 17 to Youth Justice Committee programs throughout the province.

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