

NEWS RELEASE

Ontario Calls for Immediate Federal Action on Bail Reform

Province seeking to close revolving door of justice and keep communities safe

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[Solicitor General](#)

TORONTO — The Ontario government is calling on the federal government to urgently amend the *Criminal Code* by introducing concrete changes that will tighten bail legislation to protect public safety and keep repeat and violent offenders off the streets.

“The federal government’s failure to restrict bail access and get tough on crime is making Ontario communities less safe,” said Graham McGregor, Associate Minister of Auto Theft and Bail Reform. “Our government is stepping up by hiring new judges and prosecutors and supporting our police officers, but the federal government’s inaction has made it harder to keep dangerous criminals behind bars. Enough is enough: We need meaningful bail reform now.”

While the provincial government has taken significant steps to combat auto theft and reform bail, including investing \$29 million earlier this year to appoint new judges and hire new Crown prosecutors and staff to reduce the backlog of criminal cases in the courts, the province’s ability to take further action to address serious crime and repeat offenders is limited by the federal *Criminal Code*. For that reason, the provincial government is calling on the federal government to immediately adopt the following measures to enhance public safety:

- Restore mandatory minimum sentencing for serious crimes, which this federal government removed, to ensure appropriate penalties and justice for victims.
- Remove bail availability for offenders charged with murder, terrorism, human trafficking, intimate partner violence, drug trafficking, criminal possession or use of restricted or prohibited firearms, and robbery (for example, carjackings and home invasions).
- Mandate a three-strike rule requiring pre-trial detention for repeat offenders so they are not allowed back on the street to commit more crimes before their day in court.

- Bring back restrictions on who can get conditional sentences for serious crimes so dangerous criminals receive sentences that match their actions.
- Require ankle monitors as a condition of bail for serious crimes.
- Remove credits that can be applied to sentences for time an accused spends in jail before trial for repeat and violent offenders.

These measures, which are within federal jurisdiction, are essential to keeping the people and communities in our province safe. The government urges the federal government to immediately implement these measures and looks forward to discussing other ways to protect the people of Ontario.

“Public safety has and will continue to be one of our government’s top priorities,” said Solicitor General Michael Kerzner. “We have seen a demonstrated failure of Canada’s bail system resulting in harm to the people of Ontario, and those who keep our province safe. We will not stand by while the federal government refuses to hear that the system they broke isn’t working.”

Quick Facts

- The premiers of all thirteen provinces and territories have written two letters to the federal government calling for meaningful bail reform.
- Through the Bail Compliance and Warrant Apprehension Grant, \$24 million is being made available over three years to help the OPP, municipal, and First Nations police services establish dedicated bail compliance teams. Teams will also assist prosecutors with gathering evidence and assessing public safety risk during the bail hearing stage. Grant funding may also be used to acquire bail compliance technology or support a network that police services could use to share bail offender information.
- The government is providing \$48 million to expand the OPP Repeat Offender Parole Enforcement (ROPE) Squad, by creating a dedicated Bail Compliance Unit within the OPP’s Repeat Offender Parole Enforcement Squad. This new dedicated, provincewide, Bail Compliance Unit will apprehend high-risk provincial offenders who have broken their bail conditions or are unlawfully at large.
- A further \$26 million was announced to create Intensive Serious Violent Crime Bail Teams within the courts system to ensure that there are dedicated prosecutors and subject matter experts to prepare for and properly conduct the often lengthy and complex bail hearings.
- A new provincewide bail monitoring system will allow police services to monitor high-risk offenders with the most accurate data possible.

Quotes

"The recommendations put forward to fix the bail system are a crucial step in ensuring a justice process that treats individuals fairly while keeping communities safe. Effective bail reform must strike that balance between public safety and the rights of the accused. The outlined approach underscores the government's dedication to public safety, accountability, and the well-being of everyone involved in the justice process. Stricter bail policies for repeat and violent offenders prioritize the safety and security of our communities."

- Mark Baxter
President, Police Association of Ontario (PAO)

"The OPP Association support changes to the current bail system. Our members overwhelmingly feel that the current system is a "catch and release" system that results in many of the same accused persons being at large again to re-offend shortly after arrest. We feel that the safety of our community and our police officers are at risk with this system. We acknowledge that the balance of the Canadian Charter of Rights of an accused person and community safety must be considered and welcome all efforts by all levels of government to make the system more effective for all."

- John Cerasuolo
President, Ontario Provincial Police Association

Additional Resources

- [Ontario Putting More Repeat Violent Offenders Behind Bars](#)

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