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**Standing Committee on
Justice Policy**

Strengthening Safety and
Modernizing Justice Act, 2023

1st Session
43rd Parliament

Tuesday 16 May 2023

**Comité permanent
de la justice**

Loi de 2023 sur le renforcement
de la sécurité et la
modernisation de la justice

1^{re} session
43^e législature

Mardi 16 mai 2023

Chair: Goldie Ghamari
Clerk: Thushitha Kobikrishna

Présidente : Goldie Ghamari
Greffière : Thushitha Kobikrishna

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

**STANDING COMMITTEE ON
JUSTICE POLICY**

Tuesday 16 May 2023

**COMITÉ PERMANENT
DE LA JUSTICE**

Mardi 16 mai 2023

The committee met at 0900 in committee room 2.

**STRENGTHENING SAFETY
AND MODERNIZING JUSTICE
ACT, 2023**

**LOI DE 2023 SUR LE RENFORCEMENT
DE LA SÉCURITÉ ET LA
MODERNISATION DE LA JUSTICE**

Consideration of the following bill:

Bill 102, An Act to amend various Acts relating to the justice system, fire protection and prevention and animal welfare / Projet de loi 102, Loi modifiant diverses lois relatives au système judiciaire, à la prévention et à la protection contre l'incendie ainsi qu'au bien-être des animaux.

The Chair (Ms. Goldie Ghamari): Good morning, everyone. I call this meeting of the Standing Committee on Justice Policy to order. We are meeting today to begin public hearings on Bill 102, An Act to amend various Acts relating to the justice system, fire protection and prevention and animal welfare.

As a reminder, the deadline for written submissions is 7 p.m. on Wednesday, May 17, 2023. The deadline for filing amendments to the bill is 5 p.m. on Friday, May 19, 2023. Are there any questions before we begin our public hearings?

**STATEMENT BY THE MINISTER
AND RESPONSES**

The Chair (Ms. Goldie Ghamari): I will now call on the Honourable Michael Kerzner, Solicitor General, as the first witness. I'm seeking agreement from the committee to allow the Deputy Solicitor General to attend in person as well. Is there agreement from the committee? Thank you.

You will have up to 20 minutes for your presentation, followed by 40 minutes of questions from the members of the committee. The questions will be divided into two rounds of seven and a half minutes for the government members, two rounds of seven and a half minutes for the official opposition members, and two rounds of five for the independent member of the committee.

Solicitor General, the floor is yours. Please state your name for Hansard, and then you may begin. You have 20 minutes.

Hon. Michael S. Kerzner: My name is Michael Shawn Kerzner, and I'm delighted to be here with our Deputy Solicitor General, Mario Di Tommaso. Madam Chair, it's my pleasure to speak on Bill 102—hold on. My mike is not on. Oh, it is on? If it's red, it's on? Okay. Thank you.

The Chair (Ms. Goldie Ghamari): If you'd like, you can move your mike a little bit closer. That way you don't have to lean in.

Hon. Michael S. Kerzner: Okay. Thank you.

It's my pleasure to speak on Bill 102, the proposed Strengthening Safety and Modernizing Justice, 2023. Our government knows that a safe Ontario is a strong Ontario, and with this legislation our government is taking action to keep Ontario safe for today and tomorrow and for future generations. We're providing those at the forefront of community safety with the legislative and administrative supports they need to deliver the highest-quality services across our province. As I said in the Legislature, I really do believe that some things have to matter. Our rule of law must matter, and public safety must matter. That's what this bill is about.

I've also said in the Legislature, Madam Chair, that in my generation there has never been a government that has cared more about our public safety than our government under the leadership of our Premier. Public safety will always be a top priority for this government, and this week has demonstrated just that. I want to thank the Premier for his leadership, and I want to acknowledge the leadership of the commissioner of the OPP, especially during this tough week.

Just yesterday, we joined leaders at the Toronto Police College to announce our government's latest investment in our public safety—actually, this was a couple of weeks ago. Our government is providing free tuition to new recruits completing basic constable training at the Ontario Police College. At the same time, we're expanding future cohorts to train even more cadets and strengthen our police services across our province. The future of our public safety, I believe, is bright.

That being said, we have a lot of work ahead. Ontarians and Canadians are concerned about violent crime and the illegal use of firearms, and we'll continue to partner with the federal government on these concerns and urge them to act within their areas of jurisdiction to secure our borders and safeguard our communities. Public safety will always be a top priority for Ontario and our government. We won't wait, and we won't just sit by.

We are being proactive and purposeful and precise in taking clear action so we can target crime and keep communities safe. This is why we're taking firm action to improve community safety by introducing this legislation that, if passed, would transform policing and community safety by introducing amendments to bring the Community Safety and Policing Act, 2019, into force, updating other critical pieces of public safety legislation like the PAWS Act and the Coroners Act, and supporting the modernization of the justice system.

There are many pieces of this proposed bill involving both the Ministry of the Solicitor General and the Ministry of the Attorney General. The Attorney General and his ministry focus on elements of modernizing the justice system, such as freeing up court resources to deal with serious criminal and backlogged cases. I will focus my comments on the law enforcement side and component of this bill.

As I have said before, our most fundamental responsibility as elected representatives here to this Ontario Legislature is to uphold the safety of our communities. With this public hearing, all members of this committee will have the opportunity to honour the commitment that we made to the people of Ontario to keep Ontario safe.

But in order to keep Ontario safe, we count on so many people—so many courageous people in our community—who, as I say, have chosen to cross the line, to cross the line of making a commitment of putting service over self. These are our police officers. These are our firefighters. These are our correctional, probation and parole officers; our animal welfare inspectors; our special constables and those amazing 911 call operators who I always shout out. Ontario owes a lot to these front-line heroes who have dedicated their lives to keeping our community safe.

Let's reflect on their work. I'm thinking of the police officers who are responsible for law enforcement and crime prevention. I'm thinking of the firefighters who combat smoke and flames and respond to medical emergencies, the animal welfare inspectors who navigate and investigate animals that are neglected or in distress, and coroners whose investigations into unexpected non-natural or unexplained deaths may themselves prevent further deaths, and these are just to name a few.

So here in the Legislature, we can make a difference. In fact, we must. Our community heroes choose to have our backs. We must make a commitment to have their backs. That's what this legislation is about, and that's what this committee hearing is about today. So to all those who serve, our message is simple: Your government, under our Premier, supports you now and always.

The legislation presents all of us on all sides of the committee with an opportunity to uphold our most fundamental duty, because we're responsible for the legislative framework that enables our heroes to perform their jobs. Sometimes these frameworks need updating, and to meet the challenges and changing expectations of the public, we must close legislative gaps that open with the passage of time, allowing us to make improvements and operational improvements and drive modernization.

The goal of the proposed Strengthening Safety and Modernizing Justice Act, 2023, is to build safer communities by transforming policing and other community safety and justice legislation.

So we'll begin. First and foremost, these amendments, if passed, will bring the Community Safety and Policing Act into force that much quicker. This is a path that we will be able to move forward on and deliver on our government's promise for modernized policing legislation that will enable efficient and accountable policing services.

As the members of the committee will recall, the Community Safety and Policing Act, or CSPA, was passed in 2019 following extensive engagement with policing, community and our Indigenous partners. Our government has led this modernization from the start and listened carefully to all public safety and community partners. The CSPA will be the main legislative platform for policing modernization in the province. It will replace a piece of legislation that's over 30 years old, the current Police Services Act, and will make significant changes to Ontario's legislative framework for policing. The CSPA will also support culturally responsive and equitable policing in First Nations and enable First Nations to opt in to the provincial legislative framework for policing for the very first time.

Since 2019, our ministry, the Ministry of the Solicitor General, has engaged in further stakeholder consultations, administrative, police and legal review of the statutes, and identified the need for policy and technical refinement to the CSPA to support regulation development required to bring the act into force.

0910

Key stakeholders and First Nations communities have been heavily engaged in the development of the CSPA since 2019 and are eager to see this act proclaimed and brought into force. They are also expecting an adequate window between the time we announce when the act will come into force and the date it actually comes into force—proclamation versus the date of enactment. This will allow for smoother transitions.

We're entering the home stretch. We have a pathway. Our goal is in sight. The amendments in the proposed Strengthening Safety and Modernizing Justice Act, 2023, are critical and operationally important to bring the CSPA into force and to create a new policing framework that will respect front-line officers, strengthen public confidence in police services, and deliver quality and efficient policing and police oversight.

We want to talk also, in the legislation that was tabled, to the oversight and governance. This component involves:

—adding one or more vice-chairs to the future Ontario Police Arbitration and Adjudication Commission to improve governance of that agency;

—adjusting the Ontario Provincial Police detachment board provisions to allow flexibility, by enabling the minister to make certain regulations related to the detachment boards; and

—removing statutory requirements regarding the OPP Governance Advisory Council to enable greater flexibility to better reflect the Solicitor General's advisory needs in relation to OPP policy. This is, I think, very simple and clear.

I want to talk about labour arbitration. We want to remove police services as a party to arbitration regarding a police association's duty to fairly represent its members. We want to clarify the responsibilities for costs associated with municipal police service board disputes to align with the current arbitration practice.

Let's talk about police recognition and education. We've listened, and I think that expanding the issuing of a King's Commission to municipal and First Nations officers is long overdue. Under the existing Police Services Act, the Lieutenant Governor in Council can only commission officers from the Ontario Provincial Police. We want to expand that, again, to include municipal and First Nations officers. We want to maintain the requirement to allow prospective recruits who have obtained a secondary school diploma to pursue a career as a police officer.

The clarification of the CSPA means that this would include removing provisions relating to the handling of personal information that are inconsistent with the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act and adding a regulation-making authority in the statutes that requires rules relating to data integration to be set out in the regulations.

While the primary driver of this proposed bill is to introduce legislative amendments that are important before bringing the CSPA into force, there are amendments to other community safety legislation that, if passed, would also modernize and improve the effectiveness of these statutes, and this includes to the Provincial Animal Welfare Services Act, or PAWS Act, 2019. When this act came into force on January 1, 2020, Ontario proudly became the first jurisdiction in Canada to have enforcement of provincial animal welfare legislation conducted by the province. I'm proud, and I know my colleague the member from Etobicoke–Lakeshore is proud too, that our government implemented what was widely recognized as some of the most comprehensive animal welfare legislation anywhere in Canada, and here in Ontario we've established some of the toughest penalties and fines for those who mistreat animals.

As the members of the committee will be aware, animal welfare services, or AWS, operates within the Ministry of the Solicitor General and is responsible for enforcing the PAWS Act. AWS has its own Chief Animal Welfare Inspector and a clear governance and oversight framework. The PAWS Act establishes a standard of care and a prohibition against causing animals distress that help ensure animals in the province are protected and treated in a humane manner.

Our government enforcement of the PAWS Act is working successfully, and the proposed amendments are intended to address operational challenges which would strengthen compliance and enforcement and improve

operational efficiencies. The proposed amendments relate to improving cost recovery for animal welfare services, clarifying the Animal Care Review Board process and narrowing gaps related to the Animal Welfare Inspector's authority. It is anticipated that these changes will lead to improvements in enforcement, compliance and animal welfare.

I want to talk about the Coroners Act because, as we know, under the Coroners Act, the Office of the Chief Coroner and the Ontario Forensic Pathology Service have the authority to retain and store tissue samples and body fluids obtained during a post-mortem examination. The discovery of DNA, which turned 70 this month, presents also an opportunity that we can learn so much from. The Coroners Act never contemplated the retention of materials for purposes beyond the needs of the coroner's investigation and did not anticipate medical advancement in science and technology like DNA testing. The proposed amendments recognize the evolution of medical health and science by enabling the creation of regulations that leverage evolving technology.

I want to talk briefly about the Fire Protection and Prevention Act. The Fire Protection and Prevention Act, or FPPA, establishes the legislative framework for delivery of fire protection in Ontario. Amendments to the FPPA would close the gaps in current legislation relating to cost recovery and would promote operational efficiencies. The proposed amendments would also include allowing for one deputy fire marshal. A clear and current legislative framework, I think this is an essential tool. It's actually common sense that we have a deputy fire marshal.

In conclusion, the proposed Strengthening Safety and Modernizing Justice Act clears a path to bring into force the CSPA. It creates an opportunity to modernize several elements of other community safety and justice legislation across both our Ministry of the Solicitor General and also the Ministry of the Attorney General. It is proposed legislation that will keep generations of Ontarians safe for today, tomorrow and into the future.

I'll conclude. This past March, I had an opportunity of a lifetime to go to the Ontario Police College for my third time in my tenure so far as Solicitor General. It was an amazing honour. The member from Chatham–Kent–Leamington was there with me. He'll admit it was an amazing honour, recollecting, probably, his own graduation many years prior. I've toured fire halls. I've toured correctional facilities. I've been to the coroner's office on a number of occasions. I'm inspired by the people who want to serve in public safety. I have had many, many memorable moments throughout my travels all over Ontario, including speaking with a number of members from the opposition and sharing my enthusiasm for my travels.

I believe in our province. I believe in our future. And I believe in those who keep us safe each and every day.

The Chair (Ms. Goldie Ghamari): Thank you very much.

We'll now turn to the round of questions. This round will start with the government for seven and a half minutes. MPP Coe.

Mr. Lorne Coe: Chair, through you to the Solicitor General and his deputy minister: Minister, part of the legislation is seeking to improve and modernize a system of public complaints. How will the reviews of public complaints under the Office of the Independent Police Review Director change under the law enforcement complaints agency?

Hon. Michael S. Kerzner: I want to thank my colleague for the question, Madam Chair. I'll turn it over to the deputy, but I can say that, in terms of the oversight in governance and allowing everybody to have the opportunity to voice a complaint if they have one, is important. This is part of an everyday right. But perhaps the deputy would like to speak a little further.

Mr. Mario Di Tommaso: Certainly. Currently in our system, we have the—

The Chair (Ms. Goldie Ghamari): Sorry. Please just state your name for the record, for Hansard. Thank you.

Mr. Mario Di Tommaso: I apologize. My name is Mario Di Tommaso. I'm the Deputy Solicitor General of community safety.

Currently, within our police oversight and accountability system, we have the Office of the Independent Police Review Director. In the proposed legislation amendments, what we are seeking to do is to change the name from OIPRD to the Law Enforcement Complaints Agency.

0920

One of the proposed amendments as well will enable LECA to undertake longer reviews of complaints made by the public where there has been a finding of no misconduct. So if a member of the public complains about Officer A, an investigation is conducted. After the investigation, if that determination was that there was no misconduct, the complainant has the ability to ask for a review. Currently in legislation, that review permits the OIPRD to have only 30 days to conduct that review. This amendment proposes to give the director 60 days to conduct that review. That will certainly improve on the workflow of the new Law Enforcement Complaints Agency.

Mr. Lorne Coe: Thank you, Minister and thank you, Deputy Minister, for that response. Chair, through you to MPP Bailey, please.

The Chair (Ms. Goldie Ghamari): MPP Bailey?

Mr. Robert Bailey: Welcome, Minister, and Deputy Solicitor General as well. Today I had a question about this new body that this legislation looks at creating to hear the appeal of police officers. It's called the Ontario Police Arbitration and Adjudication Commission. Maybe one or both of you could comment on that, please.

Hon. Michael S. Kerzner: Madam Chair, through you: The comment that I will make, and it was in my remarks to my great friend the member from Sarnia-Lambton, is that we will add one or more vice-chairs to the future Ontario Police Arbitration and Adjudication Commission. This is really to improve the governance. But again, I will ask the deputy to add some more in depth.

Mr. Mario Di Tommaso: Thank you. Currently, the discipline regime in the Ontario police services is one

where a senior officer of a police service is appointed by the chief of police as a hearings officer to arbitrate and adjudicate on allegations of police misconduct. What we have heard from stakeholders is that there is a perception that that particular regime is not sufficient for police associations. They want to see more transparency, more independence of police hearing officers, because they are currently appointed by a chief of police.

This new protocol will enable the chair of the Ontario Police Adjudication and Arbitration Commission to appoint a roster of adjudicators. They would be independent of a police service, so that when an investigation is conducted and the investigation finds police misconduct, those matters can be tried before an independent adjudicator where you would have prosecution and defence as well. It's very similar to current practices in criminal law and administrative law as well. It certainly clarifies the independence of adjudicators.

Mr. Robert Bailey: Thank you, Chair. Over to MPP Dixon.

The Chair (Ms. Goldie Ghamari): MPP Dixon?

Ms. Jess Dixon: Minister, we have seen news stories about situations where a large number of animals are seized from a home or removed from a home and given poor welfare. How will the proposed amendments improve cost recovery for animal welfare services in that kind of situation?

Hon. Michael S. Kerzner: Through you, Madam Chair: The proposed amendments will enable the government to collect on unpaid statements of accounts as debts of the crown. This is very important because this will give the Animal Welfare Services an additional tool to enforce payment of out-of-pocket expenses incurred by AWS in relation to food, water and veterinarian care when an animal is removed.

This is fair. This is a great deterrent as well, I might add to the member, because if a person doesn't feel that they have to pay a debt then they're not going to take this seriously. This closes that gap. I want to thank her for the question.

Ms. Christine Hogarth: Time check?

The Chair (Ms. Goldie Ghamari): We still have one minute 30. MPP Hogarth?

Ms. Christine Hogarth: Thank you, Minister, and thank you, Deputy Minister, for being here and thank you for the work you do to keep Ontario safe. I know that is your priority and you've worked tirelessly since you were elected to make sure that happened, so I thank you for your service.

My question is with regard to the name of the bill. We talk about strengthening safety. You see a lot of guns in neighbourhoods, and we hear it on the news all the time. I did a survey in my riding, and our number one issue in Etobicoke-Lakeshore is crime and safety, car theft, auto theft.

The Chair (Ms. Goldie Ghamari): One minute left.

Ms. Christine Hogarth: I know you've touched on a couple of those items over the last couple of weeks. Just last week, there was a shooting on Manitoba Street. We always say, "Oh well, it happens in neighbourhoods."

Well, this was five minutes from my house, where I walk my dog. So I'm just wondering, Minister, if you can share with the committee and maybe the people of Etobicoke–Lakeshore, who are a little concerned about their safety these days, how does Bill 102 and strengthening safety help us in our neighbourhoods to keep us safe?

Hon. Michael S. Kerzner: Well, thank you, and I want to thank my great friend from Etobicoke–Lakeshore. Really, what it does is it moves the needle on moving the CSPA forward. It clarifies the pathway. It identifies the last few steps that we need to move it forward. And at the end of the day, it will be viewed, in my opinion, as a vote of confidence to our community that our government takes public safety that much more seriously.

The Chair (Ms. Goldie Ghamari): Thank you very much. That's all the time we have for this round.

We'll now turn to the official opposition. MPP Mamakwa, you may begin.

Mr. Sol Mamakwa: Thank you, Minister, for your presentation. In one of your comments, you mentioned that you have been visiting fire halls throughout Ontario. I'm just wondering if you have ever visited fire halls in Kiiwetinoong.

Hon. Michael S. Kerzner: Well, through you, Madam Chair, as my friend from Kiiwetinoong knows, I'm looking forward to going there, and I had very much discussed with him my intentions to do so in the next short while, as soon as our House adjourns. But it's important that the narrative is—and I think he'll share in my comments—that fire safety and fire protection in Ontario is a fundamental right that we all have. It's something that our government takes seriously. And we've made major changes in terms of the certification process to allow people to become firefighters by understanding the needs of their local community as opposed to the old modelling that existed for many years of one-size-fits-all. So I'll just say, through you, to my friend, I very much look forward to coming up there.

Mr. Sol Mamakwa: I'd be very interested if you came to any fire halls in most of the communities in Kiiwetinoong just because there are no fire halls. It's not that you will not come there, but you will not find them there.

But also, Minister, one of the things that happened as well with you as a minister, as the Solicitor General, is it was promised to First Nations communities that you would enact certain provisions of the CSPA sometime this year. After four years of stalling to ensure that First Nations police services are deemed essential services in the same way off-reserve police services are, why the lack of movement?

Hon. Michael S. Kerzner: Well, thank you, and through you, Madam Chair, when I was up in Thunder Bay earlier this year and I spoke to the conference there of First Nations chiefs and First Nations police chiefs, I absolutely agreed on the urgency of moving the CSPA forward. What happened over the last number of years, and the member knows, is we've had COVID. We've had a lot of things. What we have done in following my predecessor, Minister

Jones, who paved the path, is that right now, we are in our final phases. This piece of legislation closes the loops on missing pieces that were required, allows us to have the meaningful contributions with the stakeholders and sets a very fair, but I would also say aggressive, timeline to get it done. We will, as a government, get it done because it's the right thing to do. I'll ask the deputy to comment further.

Mr. Mario Di Tommaso: Thank you. I think we have made substantial progress, and even though the Police Services Act is over 30 years old, what we are attempting to do is modernize the entire Community Safety and Policing Act, and that's a lot of work. We have approximately 70 regulations to bring into force to support the Community Safety and Policing Act. As you can imagine, in bringing these regulations and the amendments to this act into force, we want to get it right, and so stakeholder engagement is absolutely important. We don't want to leave anybody behind. We want to seek the advice of the public, First Nations, police services boards, police chief associations, community groups. That takes an awful lot of work, but we are on the final path, and I'm confident we will have the act coming into force in the fall of 2023 or very early in 2024.

0930

Mr. Sol Mamakwa: Yes, I know that—I was over at the Nishnawbe Aski Nation chiefs' meeting when they were grilling you. They brought up that issue, and that was in January. I was actually in the room. You didn't know I was there, but I happened to be there in that same meeting.

I think the failure to act on this legislation, I know, is very long, as you just described. But can you imagine any important legislation that speaks about protecting people, and it keeps on getting delayed this long in a non-First Nations setting? It would not be allowed in a different setting. We all know First Nations in Ontario are in crisis. We know that. Crisis has become a way of life, and there are deaths every day. Communities are grossly underfunded. Can you just hurry up?

Hon. Michael S. Kerzner: Madam Chair, through you, I'll say to my friend that since we attended together—and I knew he was there in Thunder Bay. There are very few places that I go to that I don't ask where he is, so he was there. It was a very good opportunity to recommit not only our sincerity of getting to the finish line but articulating a pathway to do it. With the passing of this legislation, with the ongoing stakeholder meetings that the deputy is doing, with the drafting of the regulations, with, hopefully, the proclamation that will come and the setting of the dates for the enactment which will allow the police services across Ontario to prepare and to plan for it, the goalpost is in sight, and I'm absolutely committed, our government is absolutely committed to getting to the finish line. It's not where we were over the last three years; it's where we're going now, and we're going to the finish line.

The Chair (Ms. Goldie Ghamari): One minute left. MPP Stevens.

Mrs. Jennifer (Jennie) Stevens: Madam Chair, through you to the minister, thank you for your presentation—to both of you, actually—and for attending today.

Constables on long-term leave with PTSD made up 33% of the vacancies in Ontario. Basically, recruitment goes hand in hand with retention. I know in St. Catharines, we have firefighters off with PTSD as well as our police officers. The AG report in 2021 pointed out that PTSD is contributing to staff shortages—a report I understand would have galvanized this legislation about recruitment for police services.

There is a retention issue here too. If you're going to keep recruiting and keep losing them at 30%, 33%, you need to invest in people who are going to do their job in the best way possible. My question is, has the minister performed an analysis to project how much the financial costs is in vacancies associated with traumatic stress?

The Chair (Ms. Goldie Ghamari): And that concludes the round. I was just waiting for you to finish your question, so I gave you a few extra seconds—I hope you don't mind—but you'll have to park the answer to the next round.

We'll now turn to the independent member for five minutes. MPP Blais, you may begin.

Mr. Stephen Blais: Minister, Deputy, thank you for coming this morning. There has been a fair bit of attention on the elements of the bill that change the educational requirements for becoming a police officer. These are, in fact, requirements that your government introduced four years ago but never enacted. Given that intention, I'm wondering, in the last four years, what has changed for you to change your mind?

Hon. Michael S. Kerzner: Through you, Madam Chair, it is, in fact, the education that I received from so many people in Ontario, so many police chiefs who have really educated me.

I'll tell you what it is, to the member. There are so many components that go into having a successful cadet: the experiences that they have in their own life, their commitment, their common sense, their level of maturity. There are so many other components. You have to remember that when a cadet goes through the evaluation process to apply for Ontario Police College, it's a rigorous process. It's not just, "Sign on the dotted line." There's a psychoanalytic component. There are a lot of components.

What has changed is that when we look at the cadets who are graduating today, they are a lot older. They're not just people coming out of high school. They've brought their life experiences. They've attained a certain character. They have a certain commitment. They bring the common sense. There's a greater dimension of a person.

I'll quote the great chief of police my friend from Hamilton when he says, "I want to know that a cadet will get up in the middle of the night and respond to a call of duty." There's a lot more we've learned.

Mr. Stephen Blais: Thank you for that. I'm disappointed that I'm not also a great friend of yours, but maybe we'll work on that and one day get to that point.

The Mass Casualty Commission recommended changes to the educational framework for police, whether it's a university degree or other elements; they mentioned

Finland as a good example. I'm wondering if your government is looking at any changes to the educational dynamic or curriculum length of time at the Ontario Police College, or other changes, especially given that policing—I'm not an expert in it, but my suspicion is that it has changed quite dramatically in the last number of years. Police officers are dealing with issues that they've never really had to deal with before, or at least were never public about having to deal with them before. And so I'm wondering how your government is evaluating the training and formal education, once they're chosen to enter a police service.

Hon. Michael S. Kerzner: I want to say to my friend opposite—and I apologize, because the gentleman is a very fine person. I want to say this: I've learned a lot by my three visits to the Ontario Police College. I've learned that just when they teach the new modelling of de-escalation—which, 20 years ago, as an example, was a model under a use of force—there are so many things where we are upgrading the curriculum, so much so that we're dealing with what people need to understand in today's world.

But I'd like my friend the deputy to fill in some of his thoughts.

Mr. Mario Di Tommaso: So our lived experience, sir, is that recruits, for the most part, at the Ontario Police College over the last five years—over 90% of them already have post-secondary education. So even though we are removing that requirement—

The Chair (Ms. Goldie Ghamari): One minute left.

Mr. Mario Di Tommaso: —in the Community Safety and Policing Act, we anticipate that chiefs of police will continue to have the discretion to hire who they see fit, and we anticipate that we will be responsive to local needs.

There is, in fact, a barrier when you have hard-working people who are competent and skilled and have life experience, and they don't have the ability to join a police service because of the requirement to have post-secondary education. So we are removing that requirement in hopes of getting additional people to apply to become police officers.

With regard to the OPP, as an example, we saw a 37% decrease in the number of applications in the 2022 calendar year. So this is an attempt to make hiring more equitable and to remove any barriers, but the lived experience is that over 90% of recruits already have post-secondary education.

Mr. Stephen Blais: Thank you. Well, maybe you can ponder for the next round: What changes are you planning or thinking about at the police college—not necessarily the degree element, but at the police college—once they're accepted in?

The Chair (Ms. Goldie Ghamari): Thank you. We'll have to save that for the next round.

We'll now turn to the government for seven and a half minutes. MPP Jones, you may begin.

Mr. Trevor Jones: Good morning, and—through you, Chair—thank you, Minister, and thank you, Deputy Minister, for attending today. One thing weighing on the

minds of my communities in Chatham-Kent–Leamington is that you have a model where you have municipal OPP detachments serving several distinct communities, and you have the Chatham-Kent Police Service serving the very large geographic area of Chatham-Kent. So you have these distinct communities within the OPP and their own unique detachment structures, and you have Chatham-Kent police.

One thing weighing on the mind of municipal leaders, the communities and the police members themselves is the appointment to police service boards that gives that local representation and their own unique priorities and distinct features with respect to law enforcement. The municipality of Leamington, by call-for-call level of severity, is probably the busiest OPP detachment in the province next to, probably, the city of Orillia. So my question is, how will this act change the promotion and the appointments process for police service board members?

0940

Hon. Michael S. Kerzner: Well, through you, Madam Chair—and again, I’ll ask the deputy to comment, but I’ll just say this: The OPP detachment boards provide a very important way and tool for representatives on these boards—who are made up from their communities, whether they’re appointed by the government or whether they’re appointed by the municipalities—to provide liaison with the leadership of the local detachment, and the member from Chatham-Kent–Leamington knows this.

It’s important. It allows for the leadership in a local detachment to understand feedback and concerns from the areas that they serve. I’m a great proponent of always having people contribute to the narrative. Even in our roles here, we don’t know very much. We rely on our constituents to help us each day, to tell us what’s going on. Our ridings are big—perhaps not like the gentleman from Kiiwetinoong, but our ridings are nevertheless very big—so we rely on them to tell us. It’s the same at the police board.

But I’d love the Deputy Solicitor General to add his thoughts.

Mr. Mario Di Tommaso: Thank you, sir. The proposed amendments would change the requirements so that vacancies on police services boards and OPP detachment boards are promoted while having regard for the need to ensure that police services boards—and this is very important—are representative of the communities that they serve. The intent of the amendment is to ensure that promotion of vacancies is focused on local needs, being representative of the community, and identifying the best candidates for those positions.

Mr. Trevor Jones: Excellent. Thank you.

The Chair (Ms. Goldie Ghamari): Thank you. MPP Sabawy?

Mr. Sheref Sabawy: Thank you very much, Madam Chair. Through you, I have a question to the minister.

Minister, you know that technology has been advanced too much, and there are new techniques and new tests that have been internationally recognized for searching and investigating some of the cases. We even call them sometimes “cold cases,” cases that have been cold 10

years and 12 years, and with different technologies it’s helping to either prove some innocence of some of the persecuted suspects, or even cases which didn’t get solved.

How do you see this legislation changing the Coroners Act to allow some of those new techniques to be approved?

Hon. Michael S. Kerzner: Through you, Madam Chair, I want to thank my friend, who also is a great proponent on technology. I’ve sat with him to learn a little on his leadership and what he teaches in the colleges.

I was just fortunate that about 10 years ago I was able to be part of a start-up business in DNA science, in life science, that helped me learn something where I didn’t know what its applications were for everyday life. The science is changing; DNA testing and DNA technology is representative of where technology is moving to the forefront. What the changes to the Coroners Act will allow us to do is to include DNA testing and store the information so that one day it may unlock something that will help us.

And the member is correct; he’s referring, in part—I don’t want to take the words out of his mouth, but we had a substantial crime-solved investigation that dated back over 40 years in the town of Moosonee, Ontario, that was as a result of matching DNA. What we want to do is make sure that we have the changes in the legislation that will go with the times, so I want to thank you very kindly for the question.

Mr. Sheref Sabawy: Thank you, Minister.

The Chair (Ms. Goldie Ghamari): Thank you. MPP Bresee? Oh, you don’t have a question?

Mr. Ric Bresee: No.

The Chair (Ms. Goldie Ghamari): MPP Coe?

Mr. Lorne Coe: Thank you, Chair, and through you: Minister, you and your deputy will know the incidence of post-traumatic stress in police forces across the province. You’ll also know that in the last Ontario budget, we announced \$9 million for the first-responders centre. I would like you and the deputy to talk about the importance of that particular investment and its effect on police forces across Ontario in combination with some of the programs that individual police forces have invested in with Wounded Warriors Canada, which is in my riding. Go ahead, sir, please.

Hon. Michael S. Kerzner: I want to thank my friend very much for the question, Madam Chair.

The Chair (Ms. Goldie Ghamari): One minute left.

Hon. Michael S. Kerzner: Just in reply to a question that was asked earlier, we are absolutely following the numbers of PTSD officers who are off work. It varies service by service. It is higher in some services and it’s lower. But the member is absolutely correct. The government’s investments will allow police services to have strategies that will not only reflect the care that people need and the encouragement that we have to give them to come back to work, but this is something that the pandemic showcased. It’s absolutely the fact.

However, we’ve made a lot of progress. Police services are treating PTSD absences with great seriousness. They’re providing the pathway for people to get better.

Deputy, your thoughts?

Mr. Mario Di Tommaso: Certainly, we've listened to all of our stakeholders—the independent review panel that focused on OPP suicides, as an example—and that informed our pathway forward. What we have done in the ministry under Minister Kerzner's leadership is we have stood up the health services division. One of the key—

The Chair (Ms. Goldie Ghamari): Thank you. That's all the time that we have for this round. We'll now turn to the official opposition. MPP Mamakwa.

Mr. Sol Mamakwa: Meegwetich, Minister. But also, I'm just going to tell a quick story on PTSD, and then I'll turn it over to MPP Stevens. About a couple of years ago, I had a friend who's an OPP officer, but he's off on PTSD. I remember I got this late call. It was around the holidays, between Christmas and New Year's. I remember this call. We spoke for a half hour.

I didn't know in that call, after I put down my phone, he was actually saying goodbye. It took me 90 minutes to call 911. I debated that because I didn't want to upset him. I didn't want to get him mad because I called the cops on him. But I was worried more about his life. He's still alive today. I just texted him. He always talks to me. He's very open about the struggles that he has, the things that he has seen and the lack of supports that he is getting from the OPP.

So I just wanted to share that story, because it's real. The friends that he had died by suicide—his officer friends, his colleagues. It goes to her question.

The Chair (Ms. Goldie Ghamari): MPP Stevens.

Mrs. Jennifer (Jennie) Stevens: Thank you, Madam Chair. Do I have more than a minute this time?

The Chair (Ms. Goldie Ghamari): Yes.

Mrs. Jennifer (Jennie) Stevens: Back to PTSD: Thank you for answering and addressing my question, as well as MPP Coe's question. But this goes a little further. PTSD is very serious. It's wounds that we can't see. It's our officers, our firefighters, our EMS, even within our prisons right now. I have, too, travelled and toured our local prison, the detention centre, actually, in Thorold. I've talked to the officers there, and they suffer from PTSD.

As I said, when we look at this bill and the amendments, has the ministry performed any analysis to project how much is the financial cost of the vacancies are associated with post-traumatic stress?

Hon. Michael S. Kerzner: Again, I'll let the deputy comment. But I've toured a lot of facilities recently. I always acknowledge the correctional, parole and probation officers. They are all heroes. I am looking forward to continuing the relationship that I have with the OPSEU union. I speak to the OPSEU union leadership on a regular basis.

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And it varies. The pandemic, in my opinion, ripped the band-aid off something that became more magnified and the government is absolutely committed to providing strategies to help people cope and move forward. There are different ways that we've done it.

I'll let the deputy minister be more specific to the question, other than to say that we are committed to the welfare of everyone who keeps Ontario safe. We know it's not easy. We know that. She knows it as well. It's something that we take seriously.

Deputy?

Mr. Mario Di Tommaso: We have done a financial analysis. With regard to the OPP as an example, in the last fiscal year \$45 million in WSIB costs were incurred. This is a serious issue, not just financially but because of the mental health of our people. One of the things that the OPP has done, as an example, is they've hired a chief psychologist and 12 other psychologists who are deployed within the province to assist police officers when they are in times of crisis.

At the ministry, as I was articulating before, we've also set up the health services division. Part of that division is we have a number of mental health collaborative tables and one of those tables has to do with policing. We have a number of stakeholders that look at research, they look at numbers and they consult with WSIB in terms of the path forward. We do recognize that there is much more work to be done with regard to WSIB and PTSD, absolutely.

One of the things the OPP is already doing is their peer support program. When you look at the last murder of an OPP officer, east of Ottawa, one of the things that was done was immediate deployment of psychologists and peer support workers to deal not just with the officers who attended but with the entire detachment as well. We are very cognizant of the impacts of PTSD on our members.

Hon. Michael S. Kerzner: I would just add, again, to the extent I can add an afterthought, each time we've gone through situations like we are with the passing now of Sergeant Eric Mueller, it shines a spotlight on the risk that people take each and every day to keep us safe.

I remember going not once, not twice, but all the time with the Deputy Solicitor General to visit police detachments immediately following the loss of one of our own officers. And I remember what he says. He will say, in a room—and I'm sorry to take your words, but I just want the member from St. Catharines to know. He'll say to the people in the room, "You have to take care of yourself and take care of your fellow officers, because it's very real."

Mrs. Jennifer (Jennie) Stevens: And it is. I've been dealing with a firefighter in St. Catharines, as I mentioned in my opening statement, who suffers from PTSD. Like he says, they're wounds that you can't see. My son is active in the military. He's on recruit right now. That's one of the lead questions they ask their military personnel.

Anyway, when you opened up, it was firefighters—

The Chair (Ms. Goldie Ghamari): One minute left.

Mrs. Jennifer (Jennie) Stevens: —parole officers, 911 officers, police in law. That's what this bill will look after. You address your OPP officers. I'm wondering about our firefighters and every other officer who is mentioned in the minister's opening statements. Is there anything that shows that we're going to retain police officers, firefighters who are suffering from PTSD? How are we going to address that in this bill?

Mr. Mario Di Tommaso: Once again, within our health services division, it's not just the policing collaborative tables, but we also have tables for paramedics and firefighters and probation and parole officers. We have all sorts of stakeholders that sit there. This government is proposing all sorts of funding for additional supports. So it's not just policing. We are aware of all of our public safety personnel and the needs that they have, because PTSD is very real. Although not necessarily in the proposed—

The Chair (Ms. Goldie Ghamari): Thank you. Sorry to interrupt, but that's all the time we have for this round. We'll have to turn to the independent member for five minutes.

MPP Blais, you may begin.

Mr. Stephen Blais: Ottawa is a jurisdictional nightmare when it comes to policing. We have Ottawa Police Service that covers the city; the OPP are in charge of enforcement along the highway and in our exurban communities around the city; the Parliamentary Protective Service in the precinct; RCMP on the parkways and on federal lands; and we even have military police occasionally around DND headquarters etc. The commission after the convoy talked about, and I think most leaders in Ottawa have talked about, finding ways to perhaps simplify some of that jurisdictional craziness, and I'm wondering if you can shed any light on the progress on that and your government's view on how it might work to improve that situation.

Hon. Michael S. Kerzner: Well, I want to thank my friend for the question. I'll just say this: I really have great confidence in the Ottawa Police Service. I speak to the chief of police on a regular basis, and I think it's a dynamic service that absolutely takes great love and care for the city of Ottawa.

Deputy?

Mr. Mario Di Tommaso: So this current legislation will retain the ability of the Ottawa Police Service to be the police service of jurisdiction within the municipality. I know that there were discussions with the federal government with regard to extending the parliamentary precinct across the street onto Wellington, and if that does go through, there might be an ability to streamline the provision of policing services, but right now, the Ottawa Police Service remains the police service of jurisdiction. Having said that, they work hand in hand with the Ottawa OPP detachment, and discussions between the OPP and Ottawa Police Service go on on a daily basis.

Mr. Stephen Blais: Sure, okay. Getting back to education, there's a lot of concern about that in the legislation. You addressed it earlier. I think a lot of people were taken aback by the fact that the Ontario Police College is only—I think it's 12 weeks. As we've talked about, policing is becoming more and more complicated, or it seems to be, and so I'm wondering what efforts or what plans your government might have to either change the curriculum, make it more dynamic, lengthen the time etc., ensuring that police recruits have the necessary training for the 21st-century situations they're finding themselves in.

Hon. Michael S. Kerzner: Well, through you, Madam Chair, the member is right that times are changing, and that's why the Ontario Police College has a very dynamic curriculum that has changed, that is more sensitive to the environments that we live in, to understand that Ontario looks like Ontario. Our diversity is our greatest strength. I can tell you that I have seen for myself in my three visits there the curriculum, which has changed a lot from the old reports that I read years ago.

But there's more to it. It's not just the training at the Ontario Police College. There is the training that each police service gives the cadet. There are the experiences that are shared as well. So we're not just sending somebody in for a period of a number of months to become a police officer. That's not what's happening. This is part of a road map to become a police officer. It's an integral road map. If you're coming to Toronto, as the member might know, you go to Toronto Police College. If you're going to the OPP, you're going to follow up with training there. And the OPP trains other police services as well. But I would like the deputy to add his thoughts as a graduate himself.

Mr. Mario Di Tommaso: Thank you. So the curriculum at the Ontario Police College is, in fact, evergreen, and there is a table of subject matter experts—

The Chair (Ms. Goldie Ghamari): One minute left.

Mr. Mario Di Tommaso: —that continually evaluate the curriculum and upgrade it. One of the things that has been done at the Ontario Police College very recently is an additional six days has been added to the curriculum. What I mean by that is three of those days will be focused on anti-discrimination, bias awareness, unconscious bias, awareness of First Nations, racialized groups etc., human rights, and then the other three days will be focused exclusively on de-escalation and the ways in which to deal with people with addictions and people undergoing a mental health crisis. We have developed a virtual reality training process where recruits will wear virtual reality goggles so that they can interact with an avatar and look at various training scenarios and work on their de-escalation techniques. So we are very well aware of people with addictions and mental health issues, and this is one of the ways in which we're training our police officers now. So that curriculum is evergreen. It's always changing.

Another thing that we've done—

The Chair (Ms. Goldie Ghamari): Thank you very much. That's all the time that we have. At this point, I'd like to thank the Solicitor General and the deputy associate minister—sorry, is that the correct title? Deputy associate minister or deputy minister?

Mr. Mario Di Tommaso: Deputy minister is fine.

The Chair (Ms. Goldie Ghamari): My apologies—deputy minister for their time this morning and for their presentation. At this point, the committee will now recess until 3 p.m., when we will resume public hearings.

The committee recessed from 1000 to 1500.

The Chair (Ms. Goldie Ghamari): Good afternoon, everyone. The committee will resume public hearings on Bill 102, An Act to amend various Acts relating to the

justice system, fire protection and prevention and animal welfare.

The remainder of our presenters today have been scheduled in groups of three for each one-hour time slot. Each presenter will have seven minutes for their presentation, and after we have heard from all three, the remaining 39 minutes of the time slot will be for questions from members of the committee. The time for questions will be broken down into two rounds of seven and a half minutes for the government members, two rounds of seven and a half minutes for the opposition and two rounds of four and a half minutes for the independent member.

ONTARIO ASSOCIATION OF CHIEFS OF
POLICE
TORONTO ZOO
TORONTO POLICE ASSOCIATION

The Chair (Ms. Goldie Ghamari): I will call upon the Ontario Association of Chiefs of Police, Nishan Duraipappah, who is the president, to begin their presentation. You have seven minutes. You may begin.

Mr. Nishan Duraipappah: Thank you, Chair, and members of the Standing Committee on Justice Policy. I'm honoured to be here on to be here on behalf of the Ontario Association of Chiefs of Police. I am Nishan Duraipappah. I serve as the current president for the OACP, which is the chiefs of police, and am also the chief of Peel Regional Police.

I want to begin by reiterating our association's support for the government's efforts to modernize law enforcement and strengthen public safety for all Ontarians. As you know, the matters addressed in Bill 102 are critical ones, not only for those in the justice sector, but also for the public, who count on safe communities. Professional, transparent and accountable police services play an extremely vital role in our communities. Police leaders are looking forward to the implementation of the Community Safety and Policing Act. It is legislation, as you all know, that is along overdue and that will modernize policing to align it with our community's current needs and priorities.

The proposed amendments of schedule 1 of Bill 102, which is the Strengthening Safety and Modernizing Justice Act, 2023, are a step forward towards the implementation of the CSPA. Our association has worked extremely closely with government and other policing partners to support the implementation of this act. As senior police leaders, we provide commentary and feedback on the legislation and the drafting of the associated regulations. We are pleased to see positive steps towards finalizing the act so that it can come into force. In this regard, we note that a number of the proposed amendments to the act are minor and practical amendments intended to provide clarity to the legislation. We are confident that these changes will allow for a smooth transition once the act comes into force.

Some of the more significant proposed amendments are in regard to police recruitment and education, labour

relations, and governance and oversight, which I'll speak to in more detail.

As it pertains to police recruitment and education, one of the most significant, impactful amendments of the CSPA is the proposal to repeal the change to educational requirements for new constables in Ontario. Under section 83 of the CSPA, as currently drafted, there is a requirement that all police officers must have a post-secondary certificate, diploma or degree in order to be qualified for appointment. This would represent a significant change from the current requirements under the Police Services Act, which allow a police officer to be appointed upon the minimum education requirement of four years of secondary school.

The Ontario Association of Chiefs of Police welcomes the proposed amendment to the educational prerequisites for police officers. We believe it removes systemic barriers for those who do not have access to post-secondary education. It creates opportunity for diverse candidates with a range of relevant life experiences and addresses potential hurdles to recruiting efforts in policing. I can say on behalf of many police services in Ontario that we face a tremendous amount of challenges.

I note that police services across Ontario are finding that many recruits are already investing in their own higher education prior to applying for a police constable position. We encourage our members to be lifelong learners, but as I noted, we also support efforts to address the systemic barriers that prevent candidates from choosing to join our police organizations.

In addition to education requirements, there are a number of other competencies that recruit constables must meet, including medical, psychological and fitness requirements, that make them extremely competitive. As I've noted, in light of the stringent requirements, some police services are already facing significant hurdles in recruiting qualified, competent police officers.

To be clear, this amendment will not represent a watering down of educational requirements. Police agencies will continue to hire skilled police officers of diverse educational backgrounds that represent the values and competencies required to police communities in a manner that is reflective of the diversity of those communities we do police. The OACP is proud that we ensure candidates meet the high labour standards through the constable selection system.

Next, as it pertains to the number of amendments that are aimed at improving efficiencies and clarifying roles within the Ontario Police Arbitration and Adjudication Commission regarding its labour arbitration function, we also support the amendments that create a more reasonable set of timelines that address the structure of the Ontario police arbitration system to support the oversight, accountability and the adjudication function of the agency. There is a substantive amendment that seeks to remove the police employer from the adjudication of "duty of fair representation" complaint adjudications, which are typically between the member and a labour union. While the chiefs recognize that there is not always a role for

employers in these types of hearings, there may be circumstances where the service's input is valuable and required. I note that similar circumstances occur under the Labour Relations Act, where the employer may seek to intervene. While police employers do not necessarily need a statutory right to be a party to the matters, they should be offered the opportunity to seek to intervene if required.

Finally as it pertains to governance and oversight—I recognize I'm approaching my seven-minute mark—I would also like to address some of the proposed changes regarding governance and oversight. Many of these changes are aimed at ensuring the new inspector general has the tools and mechanisms in place to provide effective monitoring. We welcome these changes and look forward to having a streamlined and effective oversight body aimed at ensuring policing remains transparent and accountable.

The Chair (Ms. Goldie Ghamari): One minute left.

Mr. Nishan Duraiappah: Thank you.

The proposed amendments outlined in Bill 102 which repeal the provisions in relation to the governance advisory council and instead allow the ministry to create a short term or ad hoc advisory body if or when needed—the OACP supports this proposed amendment, which streamlines an already effective governance mechanism and allows more flexibility and efficiencies where possible.

I will wrap up my comments as I finish here. In January of this year, the OACP made submissions before this committee on bail reform which were focused on protecting victims in crime that proposed improved amendments to the bail system. At the time, we encouraged the committee to consider enhanced training for justices of the peace, which we see has also been introduced here.

Once again, I thank you, and I'm grateful for the opportunity to support our elected representatives in ensuring that the proposed legislative amendments meet the needs of policing right across this country and this province. Thank you.

The Chair (Ms. Goldie Ghamari): Thank you very much, Chief Duraiappah. You finished right at seven minutes, so that was excellent timing.

We'll now turn to the Toronto Zoo for their presentation. Please state your name for the record, and then you may begin. You will have seven minutes. Thank you.

Mr. Grant Furniss: It's Grant Furniss, from your Toronto Zoo. Let me kick off with: Very good afternoon, and thank you for this opportunity to present to you today. My name is Grant Furniss, and I'm the very proud new director of wildlife care at your Toronto Zoo. Also joining me virtually this afternoon is Dr. Gabriela Mastro Monaco, senior director of wildlife science, and Chris Dulong, who is one of our wildlife care supervisors at the zoo.

I was born, raised and educated in South Africa, and I have more than 27 years of experience in the wildlife conservation fields, both ex situ and in situ, with a very strong emphasis on advancing animal welfare and safety. I have a very strong knowledge and understanding of the

highest accreditation standards. I know what good animal care is. Well-being and welfare is a major priority.

Prior to moving to Toronto, I was the senior director of animal care and conservation at Assiniboine Park Conservancy in Winnipeg, where I was responsible for all operational aspects of the animal care team. Prior to that, I was the operations manager, animal care, at the Calgary Zoo Wilder Institute. These Canadian organizations, as well as your Toronto Zoo, are all accredited by the Association of Zoos and Aquariums, also known as AZA. AZA has set the highest animal well-being standards and is an international accreditation body active in 13 countries—the gold standard in animal welfare.

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I have extensive experience in animal management and a degree in nature conservation, which I got from the University of South Africa. I also work with an incredible team of wildlife care professionals, reproduction and nutrition scientists, conservation science researchers, veterinarians and wildlife care experts at your Toronto Zoo. We are extremely passionate about animal well-being, not only for the animals in our care but also for animals that do not have a voice and are kept in suboptimal conditions in unaccredited facilities and private ownership in Ontario.

That is why we are here today: to support the additional steps that the government is taking by proposing amendments to Bill 102, the Provincial Animal Welfare Services Act. These proposed amendments are aimed at improving cost recovery and clarifying and updating the Animal Care Review Board—ACRB—and other processes. But more importantly, these proposed amendments will enhance and clarify inspector powers to improve animal welfare outcomes.

We all want improved animal welfare outcomes. Unfortunately, we have seen first-hand some very troubling and, quite frankly, unsafe, unsanitary and dangerous situations with animals being held in private ownership or in unaccredited roadside zoos. In 2019, your Toronto Zoo assisted in relocating and temporarily caring for animals, including tigers, seized from a roadside zoo in Quebec. In the summer of 2021, the Toronto Zoo was prepared to provide a temporary home for some lions and tigers being held in private ownership in Maynooth, Ontario, following provincial animal welfare charges against their owners. Many staff even volunteered to move to the area for an extended period to care for these animals. Unfortunately, though, the current law allows for the private relocation of these animals without any oversight. These circumstances are not only unsafe for the animals but pose a significant public safety threat as well.

As part of our new master plan, your Toronto Zoo is committed to building a saving species sanctuary over the next several years that could accept animals like these that have been confiscated from across the province. We are willing to do our part to help these exotic animals, and we are pleased to see the government of Ontario taking additional steps to do their part. We look forward to supporting you by supporting animals that need our help.

Since the Toronto Zoo opened in 1974, it has been a leader in conservation, research, education and animal well-being, committed to saving and protecting species and their habitats at home and abroad. Our mission is to connect people, animals and conservation science to fight extinction.

Today's modern, progressive and accredited zoos feature programs with habitats designed to match each animal's specific needs as individuals. Accredited modern zoos are very much tied to conservation science and education and are ambassadors for the species they help to conserve. Your Toronto Zoo is a leader in wildlife conservation and advocating for wildlife and their habitats, especially Canadian species like the Blanding's turtle, Vancouver Island marmots, black-footed ferrets, eastern loggerhead shrikes and more. These Canadian species at risk and endangered species are reared, raised and then released by staff at your Toronto Zoo. These are just a few local examples. We are continuing to be active globally, supporting endangered on-the-ground conservation efforts for species including orangutans, gorillas and penguins in the wild.

When guests visit our zoo, they see only part of the program. For example, the polar bear habitat in the Tundra Trek is not just an exhibit.

The Chair (Ms. Goldie Ghamari): One minute left.

Mr. Grant Furniss: It also supports projects on reproductive research, polar bear nutrition, education and ongoing partnerships with Polar Bears International.

The Toronto Zoo is proud to participate in many conservation programs, many of which are supported by the Ontario government through the Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry and the Ministry of the Environment. We are also in unison with the IUCN, which is the International Union for Conservation of Nature, and the World Association of Zoos and Aquariums.

The government of Ontario has an opportunity to be a leader in ensuring exotic animals are protected in our province. Currently, anyone in Ontario can open a zoo without a licence or permit.

On behalf of the staff and volunteers at your Toronto Zoo, we commit to working with you to make Ontario a leader in wildlife protection for exotic animals and saving animals from extinction. Thank you.

The Chair (Ms. Goldie Ghamari): Thank you very much. We'll now turn to our third presenter. From the Toronto Police Association, we have President Jon Reid. Please state your name for the record and then you may begin. You have seven minutes.

Mr. Jon Reid: It's Jon Reid, president, Toronto Police Association. Good afternoon, Chair, Vice-Chair, members of the standing committee, legislative staff and, of course, my colleagues who are appearing before you this week. I would like to thank you for having me here today.

My name is Jon Reid, and I'm the 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 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 and wear a uniform, sworn and civilian alike. They cannot take matters and speak to them publicly. They must remain impartial in executing their duties—duties they execute day in and day out, often facing peril and undeserved criticism.

But this isn't the only burden the policing family faces. I would be remiss in not taking a moment to honour the lives and sacrifices made by all members who have lost their lives in the line of duty in recent history. Just last week, Sergeant Mueller of the OPP had his life taken in the line of duty. It is yet another stark reminder of the ultimate sacrifice police officers can make in the service of others. On behalf of the TPA and its 8,000 members, I would like to offer Sergeant Mueller's family, friends and colleagues our sincerest condolences.

The collaborative work on the Community Safety and Policing Act has been something the TPA, along with our association partners, has been actively involved in since its 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 the police services.

The language in the amendments in relation to the powers of the inspector general are a welcome change. Stipulating, specifically within section 20(1), "The inspector general may make an order requiring a police service board or the 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 are often working within the confines and limitations of the environment provided to them by the police service boards and the chief.

But again, I stress the need for continued engagement in crafting a definition of "adequate and effective policing" that ensures we set the inspector general up for success in that oversight role. Anything less would be a disservice to both our members and our communities.

Continuing with the reference to the inspector general, the act goes on, within section 126, to detail the different powers and orders available to the inspector general when dealing with non-compliance with the act or the regulations. A proposed amendment within Bill 102 is the consideration of lesser measures. This is inserted at 126(1.1), which reads, in part, "The inspector general shall ... consider whether any lesser measure available in the circumstances would remedy the non-compliance."

This essentially codifies what is known as the principle of restraint. If this approach is taken for those police

service boards or those in the position of chief when found in non-compliance, I would expect the same principle to apply to 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. The 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 is steadily increasing, leading to a major deficit in boots on the ground. I would go as far as to say and 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 is welcome.

1520

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, we should focus on their training at that point. Let's open the door as wide as possible to get the best recruits we can, and we will then train them and provide them with the skills they need. I believe 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 actually the same as 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 opportunities or financial means to pursue a degree.

The Chair (Ms. Goldie Ghamari): One minute left.

Mr. Jon Reid: We do not want to create barriers and shut down excellent candidates with a diverse background.

Committee members, I'm cognizant of my time limits.

The TPA will continue to engage this committee and the rest of government on these important issues. Thank you for your time today. I welcome any questions you may have.

The Chair (Ms. Goldie Ghamari): Thank you very much.

We'll now turn to the independent member for the first round of questions, for four and a half minutes. MPP Blais, you may begin.

Mr. Stephen Blais: My question is for Chief Nishan. Thank you for your presentation today.

During your deputation, you mentioned that schedule 1 of the act is a step in achieving the full aspects of the Community Safety and Policing Act from 2019. I'm wondering if you can expand on what you think the next steps are or what steps after this legislation are left undone that need to happen.

Mr. Nishan Duraiappah: Thank you for the question, sir. I appreciate some of the comments from Mr. Reid, as well.

Of course, we know that schedule 1 has some formative changes that will get us closer to seeing the act come into force. We've been working tremendously with staff at the Solicitor General's office as it pertains to other changes in the act that we have provided feedback on, one of which, Mr. Reid mentioned, is under the one section of adequate and effective policing. We do see that there are opportunities, formatively, to see the act continue to mirror some of the changes we've been asking for as it pertains to helping us be more effective. What has happened in these changes in schedule 1 is that they have, in my perspective, been the lower-hanging fruit of getting police recruitment, labour relations and the government oversight pieces done. But we do believe that there are opportunities for us to continue to work on some of the other regulations that have not been finalized yet. I know some are out for feedback and have been posted under the CSPA. But I think if there is an opportunity for us, as OACP, and also the labour associations to continue to provide feedback, as the government has been doing—thus far, we've had an opportunity even just to provide formative feedback on embargoed pieces of the act and regulations. We just would say we continue to encourage our engagement moving forward.

Mr. Stephen Blais: Thank you.

Mr. Reid, I think you said that in Toronto today there are fewer officers—I'm not sure if that's a raw number or if that's per capita—than there were many years ago. Outside of budget constraints, what's the largest contributing factor to that decline in the number of officers?

Mr. Jon Reid: We had a transitional task force that made a decision to actually reduce the number of police officers here in Toronto. At one point around 2010, we were up around 5,600 police officers; by the time the transitional task force was completed, we were down to around 4,700. So we're in the process now of trying to get those numbers back up, as Toronto is growing exponentially—

Mr. Stephen Blais: My apologies if I'm cutting you off; I'm just cognizant of the time.

Being unfamiliar with this task force, what was the rationale for the recommendation to reduce the number of officers?

Mr. Jon Reid: I think efficiencies were the goal, and unfortunately that wasn't really the net result.

Mr. Stephen Blais: Okay. Thanks. Madam Chair, I'm done.

The Chair (Ms. Goldie Ghamari): Okay, thank you. We'll now turn to the government side, beginning with MPP Saunderson.

Mr. Brian Saunderson: Thank you to the panel this afternoon. My question is to Chief Duraiappah and Mr. Reid. Mr. Reid, you spoke in your comments about staffing issues, and you've said it's really reached a crisis proportion. We've seen over the last 10 months, I think across the country but particularly in Ontario, the death of a number of constables in the line of duty, the most recent being Constable Mueller, and I'm wondering if you can comment.

We've had some criticism about reducing the post-secondary education requirements. You addressed that in your comments talking about life experience. I'm wondering if both of you gentlemen can talk about what you foresee as the positives of reducing that education barrier, about how we ensure that we are getting constables who have life experience, who reflect the populations that they're serving. And then, as a corollary to that, how would you increase your own internal education and training to augment that? And, with the recent report of the mass killings task force on the east coast, how would you incorporate that in the training to address those issues. Perhaps if I could maybe please start with you, Mr. Reid.

Mr. Jon Reid: Yes, sir. So as far as staffing goes, we are now in a staffing crisis, and I cannot be more firm: When you start looking at what actually happened with the staffing here in Toronto, once you start bringing the numbers down, it made it almost impossible for us to catch up again. I think as far as the education component, there's huge benefit to it. The one thing I really want to be clear on, as well, is they're not dropping the education level right now. Anybody who's currently applying to be a police officer under the Police Services Act has to have grade 12. That's the way it has always been. The new legislation would actually up the requirement, so that seems to be a misunderstanding, I think, out there in the public.

As far as education components, as I mentioned before, if we can get the good people in through the front door and then provide opportunities for them to go to post-secondary, get additional training and learning—one thing in Toronto we used to do was to actually contribute a portion of the degree. It would be a shared costing between the member and the service. Things like that, I think, are valuable. The service gets to reap the benefit of having members who are going on for further education. It's great for increasing staffing from the point of view of identifying people to move up through the ranks in supervisor capacities, and obviously upwards towards senior command, and I think there's huge value in that. But I think trying to put a stop or a roadblock in the way of people trying to get on as police officers is flawed and hugely problematic.

Mr. Brian Saunderson: Thank you. And Chief Duraiappah?

Mr. Nishan Duraiappah: Just to build off Mr. Reid's comments, I think right across this province—and I can speak on behalf of my colleagues out of the 53 police agencies in the province—we're all seeing a recruiting and resourcing challenge. You can go to the small, medium-

sized communities, right to large urban ones, and we're under the pretense that we're already challenged to get people in the door and consider the policing profession.

I just want to make a comment: Jon and I probably had the opportunity to see our international standards from policing. Here in Canada, we have some of the greatest training and standards when we do on-board people comparative to many other countries, and that's from fitness, medical, psychological and then also our really intense training that we send people through. So when we get people through the door, we can really look after them well and make sure they're well equipped from a training standpoint. That responsibility will still always be ours, to make sure we get people on the road that are well-equipped and trained.

What we see, particularly in Peel, is if we have international applicants, newcomers to Canada, it's really difficult to get an equivalency sometimes on paper to show educational requirements. Some have left countries where they leave without any records of such, and it's really, really a barrier to do that. And then just to think about paying \$17,000 to get to go to police college when you're 21, 22 does pose a lot of barriers.

1530

Our Indigenous communities and police services also have some challenges recruiting. Not that we're compromising the quality and growth and skill level of these individuals, but to have them be able to just put an application in without a barrier is a really remarkable thing for us, particularly when we have the most diverse population in North America right here in this province. It's a powerful thing to allow that to happen for us.

Mr. Brian Saunderson: Thank you very much to both of you.

I'll now share my time with MPP Kusendova-Bashta.

The Chair (Ms. Goldie Ghamari): MPP Kusendova-Bashta, you have two minutes.

Ms. Natalia Kusendova-Bashta: Thank you to all of our presenters this afternoon. Chief Nish, it's always great to see you. I always talk of Peel police as a jewel in our crown. We're very, very proud of what happens in the region of Peel: your work on combatting systemic racism in policing through the Human Rights Project, and human trafficking; the mobile crisis intervention unit, which is one of my favourites; also your efforts to recruit women in policing through specialized sessions; and your work on senior safety. I'm just so proud to be a representative from Mississauga and to work with great people, men and women in uniform, in the region of Peel.

Chief, you already answered my question a little bit, but you talked about some of the systemic barriers to entry into the profession of policing, whether these are educational requirements or cost requirements. Thank you for bringing up the issue of the equivalency educational requirements for people who may be trained somewhere else, who may have education from foreign countries.

The Chair (Ms. Goldie Ghamari): One minute.

Ms. Natalia Kusendova-Bashta: We hear that a lot in other professions whether it's teaching or nursing, but it's

the first time I've heard that in policing. Can you elaborate on that a little bit?

My second question is that sometimes we're hearing harmful rhetoric on defunding the police from certain interest groups. Can you maybe speak to how that makes your job even harder when it comes to recruiting and retaining police officers?

Mr. Nishan Duraiappah: Absolutely, thank you. It's good to see you as well. The barriers for application really—our biggest challenge, particularly for example in Peel, where we have a 70% racialized population, if you just look at the nature of what the last two to three years look like for our entire sector in policing, we would all want the best candidates to come in the door. We also strive to have gender-diverse applicants—

The Chair (Ms. Goldie Ghamari): My apologies, Chief Duraiappah, I do have to cut you off there. You'll have to save the rest of your response for the next round.

We'll now turn to the official opposition for the first round of questions. Who would like to begin? MPP Wong-Tam, you have the floor.

MPP Kristyn Wong-Tam: Thank you to all the presenters who are here today and who have virtually joined us.

My first question for Chief Duraiappah—please forgive me if I've mispronounced your name; I'm going to get it right. Thank you very much, Chief Duraiappah. I'm very interested in knowing the strategy around retention, because obviously we need to have officers coming in through the pipeline, through employment, but also keep them there so that they're not off-ramping too early.

We've heard about PTSD. We've heard about perhaps other challenges that face a police officer and that lead them to early retirement. I'm just really curious: At what time is there an exit strategy with respect to interviews determining why officers who are highly trained—and of course it takes a lot of time to get them to those skills; we want to keep them in the force for as long as possible, and then we see them exit early. What is happening there? Why are they leaving before their retirement date?

Mr. Nishan Duraiappah: Thank you very much for the question. I think right across our sector we all make efforts to have exit interviews with our officers who do choose to leave the profession. I think probably the most common one we see is quality-of-life issues. We all hope that they have a 30-year career in policing, but the demographics of those we're hiring now, we know that they want quality of life to be at the foremost and quite often the urban pressures or the pressures that we've placed on them with resourcing shortages and occupational stress injuries have a compounding effect.

We try to look at compensation. Can it be offset through compensation and benefits to keep them incentivized to stay? But what we're finding is our people—the risk and impact on their well-being and the environment they're in sometimes outweighs the paycheque that they get. Right now, policing is seen as the multi-tool for probably mental health, addictions, precarious housing, food insecurity, youth-related issues. We ask them to do everything, and that can be burdensome on them, without a doubt.

So that is a significant problem. Mr. Reid and I have chatted many times about what we can do to make sure that they continue to stay within the profession. It's not always what comes with their paycheque or benefits; it's the environment and the need for them to feel supported as well, which, as you know—social media and media is not easy on us as a profession from time to time, and that has a compounding impact on an officer's decision to stay or go.

MPP Kristyn Wong-Tam: Thank you very much. I think every politician in this room could probably relate to the social media impact there as well.

I wanted to maybe turn my next question to President Reid. Thank you very much for joining us today. Along the same lines, obviously, we want to be able to solve the problem that exists in Ontario, and in some places, as I understand it, it's even more difficult to recruit officers and to retain them—never mind retaining them; you can't even get them through the door. And in particular communities of the north and also within Indigenous communities, there's just a different environment—not just natural environment but the social environment that's there. I'm just really curious to know, are you having that same problem in urban centres like in Toronto in terms of police recruitment? Are there officers not wanting to work for the Toronto police?

Mr. Jon Reid: So we are having some of those problems as well, and building on what the chief was just saying, I think you have to really take a look at what are the issues causing people to actually depart from the service and separate, things like mental health. Mental health is a hugely important piece for our members, to make sure we look after them. But I think we can always do more at the front end if we end up with a critical incident to try to provide as much support as we can on the front end so we end up being proactive instead of reactive. Reactive is kind of the older way of doing things. Going there after the fact, after an officer has already developed PTSD and has gone off work is too late. We need to put more resources in the front end for that particular issue, I think, to try to assist those members who are not doing well to get better sooner and get them back to work. I think that's one of the key pieces there.

Another reason people leave: They're burnt out, quite frankly. So once again, what do we do to solve that problem? Well, you need more bodies. You need more police officers on the road to be able to answer the radio calls. As I mentioned, here in Toronto, one of the problems we've run into is the downsizing of the service; meanwhile, the city has grown exponentially. The officers are just being asked to do more and more and more with less and less and less. At some point, something has got to give, and that's where people, I think, decide to leave.

MPP Kristyn Wong-Tam: I think you and Chief Duraiappah have a lot in common with respect to your response. And because there's so much that's being asked of police—not just Toronto police, but all police officers. Not only are you the first responders; you're asked to become the marriage counsellor; you're asked to engage

with youth and recreation programs; you're also asked to participate in ensuring that there are safe environments for kids, especially around the school system, maybe not necessarily in the school; and also, being the first responders for someone who is in crisis or distress who is having a mental health challenge or breakdown or is in some state of psychosis.

I think in my experience with the police officers on the front line that I deal with, oftentimes in 51 and prior to that 52 division, 53 division, one of the things that struck me was that the police will respond, and they're usually the first to get there, but there's no pathway to housing, and there's no pathway to mental health supports, or there's no pathway to crisis beds that they can bring those individuals who are experiencing the crisis in the moment to, so they end up staying with the—

The Chair (Ms. Goldie Ghamari): One minute left.

MPP Kristyn Wong-Tam: They end up staying with the person who is in crisis a bit longer. How much of that factors into the burnout condition that police officers are facing? That's to Mr. Reid.

Mr. Jon Reid: I would say that's going to be a part of it, from the point of view of—our members want to go out there and do a good job. But to your point, we have to get away from this or that. We need to make sure the police officers out there have the ability to divert people to the proper resources to assist them, so they can move on and hopefully get better, or move out of a particular circumstance they find themselves in.

1540

I think that's really one of the important, key things: making sure there's a well-rounded pool of resources for the officers to rely on to do their jobs.

The Chair (Ms. Goldie Ghamari): Thank you. We'll now turn to the independent member for four and a half minutes. MPP Blais.

Mr. Stephen Blais: Mr. Reid, you mentioned a minute ago that once an officer or an employee is experiencing PTSD, it's often too late; they're on the pathway to leaving the service. What's stopping you or other police organizations from having that proactive ability before that point? Is it resourcing? Is it a cultural issue? What's the challenge there?

Mr. Jon Reid: Just to correct something: I wasn't actually saying that as soon as someone develops PTSD, they're going to leave the service. I was saying that once they have developed it, it's too late. We should be trying putting more effort at the front end, to assist the members.

Mr. Stephen Blais: For sure. I'm sorry if I mischaracterized it. So what's the challenge in the front-end part of it?

Mr. Jon Reid: I think, quite honestly, it's resources once again. These are very, very important pieces. These officers have undergone a lot a lot of training. Quite frankly, the city has put a lot of money into the training of the officers. They put a lot of their own time into it. We need to make sure that when we send them out there to do a job, they are properly supported through the resources, but that's going to cost money.

Mr. Stephen Blais: I get that, and everything costs money. But what is that? Is that on-staff psychologists? Is that some kind of reporting mechanism? Is it a police cultural issue in terms of—well, it's a societal cultural issue; no one wants to admit that they're having problems. What is on the front end there?

Mr. Jon Reid: Things like service psychologists are a great idea. I think we need more of a wraparound process to assist members if there is a critical incident, and how that's going to unfold really depends on the service. But we look at it from the point of having on-staff psychologists and CIRT teams, which are actually teams that will go out right after a critical incident to support and speak with the members, to make sure they're supported right from the get-go.

Mr. Stephen Blais: And so are there not on-staff psychologists at the moment?

Mr. Jon Reid: We don't have the ability to have psychologists come out to every shooting, no.

Mr. Stephen Blais: Sure. And that's a volume problem?

Mr. Jon Reid: I'm not sure if it's volume or it's just an access problem from the point of view of not having psychologists available who work within the service all the time.

Mr. Stephen Blais: Sure. Okay.

And, Chief, I guess I'd like your point of view on the same questions.

Mr. Nishan Duraiappah: Thank you, sir. Jon is right: It is a resourcing issue. We clearly, as a profession, have matured in our awareness of what needs to be built in on the front end to ensure there's resiliency with our people. It's a combination of programming and our awareness that we create—you mentioned it—a culture where it's okay to talk about the occupational stress injuries. Traditionally our profession has just gone on with business.

But in order to strengthen that programming, it does require clinicians. It does require specific teams and units that are available to build greater awareness of wellness-related initiatives. Even just having our people—we've learned from our colleagues in the US, where you can strengthen and resource front-end occupational and organizational wellness programming. There's a direct correlation to getting them back to work better.

Those all take resourcing, which we are slowly—on one hand, we're trying to put boots on the ground; on the other hand, we're strapped to get resources to do that, too, so it is a bit of a push-pull.

The Chair (Ms. Goldie Ghamari): One minute left.

Mr. Stephen Blais: So, Chief, very quickly: Often, when we're talking about budgets, it's not just police; it's really across the board. If there is X amount of additional money to put into something, we often like to buy the thing, right? Buy the car, buy the piece of equipment, buy the building, and not necessarily into soft services, which I think is kind of in the line of what we're talking about here. How do we ensure that if there is X amount of dollars more, that goes into the types of things that you're talking about now, and not just buying the stuff you can touch?

Mr. Nishan Duraiappah: As the chief, I can just say it has to be the priority of the police services board or the chief to ensure that there are concurrent investments into the programming. If different police services are at different points of maturity where they have not historically invested in that space, it needs to be a budget line item. But it can't be at the expense of not having an officer respond to a 911 call, too, right? So it's not one or the other, but it is a concurrent programming need that I think now most agencies are—

The Chair (Ms. Goldie Ghamari): Thank you, that's all the time that we have for this round. We'll now turn to the government, MPP Bashta—Kusendova-Bashta.

Ms. Natalia Kusendova-Bashta: MPP Bashta is okay. I'm sure my husband would appreciate that.

I just wanted to go back to the chief and also Mr. Reid for my second question in terms of some of the rhetoric that we've been hearing, certainly coming from the States but getting louder even here in Canada and in Ontario. As recently as a couple of weeks ago, some school boards were not allowing parents in uniform to come into the schools for take your parent to school day. How is this kind of sentiment that we're seeing in our communities impacting your ability to recruit new officers?

Mr. Nishan Duraiappah: Jon, if you don't mind, maybe I'll go first. I think it has had a negative impact on us in terms of our profession. Just for clarity, the nine US cities that ended up defunding their police have all gone back to refunding them. It has a direct correlation on public safety and impact.

Just to pause, if the community has been saying to invest in other human services so there's not an over-reliance on us for things we shouldn't be doing, I think we would all agree—I think Jon even referred to it—that we want those other off-ramps and pathways to be resourced, but it can't be at the expense of reducing police budgets when we have real urban problems that are here. It's just going to continue to grow. It has a direct correlation. We don't think the sky is falling all the time. We do want to see alternative response clinicians or a mental health crisis worker with a police officer. We know that improves the quality of service. Those service streams need to be invested in, but not at the expense of policing.

Now we're seeing with what's happened to all these officers that have been shot and killed—I think there's that overall opposition to institutions and agencies like policing and government. I think what we're seeing is it coming to a head, really, in my perspective. We need to be thoughtful and tempered in how we continue to proceed, because it does have an impact on not just our officers but the community.

Ms. Natalia Kusendova-Bashta: Thank you. Mr. Reid?

Mr. Jon Reid: I think, also, as far as the defund movement and all the negative rhetoric, it has an impact on our officers but also on our officers' families as well. We have these officers, they put on a uniform every day, and nothing could be more poignant than what's happened over the last 10 or 11 months, with these officers being

murdered. We have these families where their husband, wife, father, son, daughter goes to work each and every day, and now it's really come back to prove to everyone and show there's a real possibility this could happen.

I think that really has impacted our members' wellness. The rhetoric itself, a lot of it is driven up from the US, unfortunately, and a lot of them are US problems. We live in Canada. Canada is a fantastic place to live. Ontario is a great place to live. Toronto is fantastic. We need to make sure that the public know the officers are here to help them. The officers, each and every day, go out there and do the best they can to serve the public and make sure the public is taken care of, to answer these 911 calls.

Ms. Natalia Kusendova-Bashta: Thank you.

The Chair (Ms. Goldie Ghamari): Thank you. MPP Jones?

Mr. Trevor Jones: Thank you, gentlemen. If I can please bring the attention of both the chief and President Reid to the section 126(1) amendments of the CSPA: I would argue that few people outside of policing know the role or the office of an inspector general. That being said, what would the impact be of the gradual, more progressive enforcement options for the inspector general, as far as your role as chief of police and your role, Mr. Reid, on your members—the office and the role and the gradual ability to have greater enforcement options and probably greater influence?

Mr. Jon Reid: I think, from the association's point of view—and the reason I mentioned that in my comments—if it's going to be applied to chiefs and boards, it should also be applied to the officers on the road doing their job each and every day. We are one of the most reviewed jobs in, probably, the world. There are all sorts of different levels of accountability, where our members, if they're cleared by one body, get investigated by another body, then another body. It really does weigh on our officers.

But I think knowing that if, in fact, they do actually make a mistake, they're going to be treated fairly—I believe the consideration for lesser measures is something which should be adopted from the top on down, all the way through to our members as well.

Chief?

1550

Mr. Trevor Jones: Thank you, sir.

Mr. Nishan Duraiappah: Yes. Thank you, Jon. I'm a proponent of making sure the inspector general has the tools and mechanisms that they need to be effective. We are probably one of the most oversighted bodies or professions there, but the public still demands transparency and accountability. If, for example, the inspector general does not have the ability to effectively do its role, then we're actually bolstering that narrative that these oversight mechanisms are just performative. As it continues to grow, we believe that there's a good opportunity for the IG's office to be really effective in that space.

Mr. Trevor Jones: Thank you. And for the record, maybe, Chief, you could answer this succinctly and briefly: Just describe what you tell your officers on the number of levels of oversight by maybe just naming the

bodies or the level of scrutiny, like Mr. Reid was saying, that all police members are under. If you could, for the record, just name the levels or bodies of potential scrutiny other than the general media and one another, more specifically.

The Chair (Ms. Goldie Ghamari): And one minute left.

Mr. Nishan Duraiappah: Sure, absolutely. There are the SIU, OCPD. There's a civilian complaints commission. There are inquests, OIPRD, which is the Office of the Independent Police Review Director. Much of those bodies are going to change. It's civilian and court-based tribunals, the Ontario Human Rights Commission.

Jon, I'm probably missing a bunch of them, but there are a lot, and we tell our officers—and I don't want to quote Spider-Man, but with great responsibility, there is a lot of accountability. There are a lot of them. It is overwhelming, and it can have an impact on our officers' decision-making and their wellness to feel like they're always and only going to be under scrutiny.

Mr. Trevor Jones: Thank you, sir.

The Chair (Ms. Goldie Ghamari): There's five seconds.

Ms. Christine Hogarth: Oh, shoot. I have a question, but since I don't have time, I just want to thank all of you: Chief Nish, President Reid, Mr. Furniss. Thank you for what you do every day. Thank you for protecting our animals, and thank you both for protecting our communities. I want you to know our government has your back.

The Chair (Ms. Goldie Ghamari): Thank you very much.

I think, Chief Duraiappah, the quote you meant was, "With great power comes great responsibility." That's the one. I, too, might be a Spider-Man fan.

We'll now turn to the official opposition for the last round of questions. Who would like to begin? MPP Wong-Tam.

MPP Kristyn Wong-Tam: I certainly appreciate this conversation. I think that what would be interesting to know is the average age of officers as they're coming on board, and maybe the first question is to Chief Duraiappah, because you have the province-wide lens.

Mr. Nishan Duraiappah: Thank you. I think, for example, in Peel our average age we're seeing is approximately 25 or 26. But out of the 2,000 officers that we've got on front line, the average seniority for them is about four years on the job, and they're roughly mid-to-late twenties.

Jon, I'm not sure if that's the same for you in Toronto.

Mr. Jon Reid: Our average hire age is just over 29 years old, and our experience on the front line is probably very similar to what the chief described there.

MPP Kristyn Wong-Tam: And what would that be?

Mr. Jon Reid: Experience-wise, it's probably around three to four years' front-line experience. We've had a huge influx of younger officers—or not "younger" but new officers on the service over the last few years.

MPP Kristyn Wong-Tam: Thank you. And if the recruits are coming in at age 25 or 26 in Peel and then 29

around the city of Toronto, most likely policing was not their first choice. Is that a safe assumption to say? I know when I hit 29, I was probably by that time in my third career, believe it or not.

Mr. Jon Reid: I don't actually have the stats, but I would think some people have actually tried getting into policing when they were younger, when we were not hiring. We are now hiring again, province-wide, and I think now is an opportunity for some of the individuals that may have applied previously and didn't get hired to maybe reapply. Maybe they have a little bit more life experience now. They may have gone back to school and gotten some continuing education as well; I'm not sure. But I think those individuals that are coming to Toronto now and to policing are welcome, and I think there are obviously going to be excellent candidates, the people that are now applying and the people we've hired.

MPP Kristyn Wong-Tam: Okay. Thank you. That's really helpful to know.

With respect to schedule 1, I think both of you officers spoke about the fact that you perhaps believed or felt that there was adequate oversight around police operations, or perhaps too much oversight. So I just wanted to clarify, starting with Mr. Reid: Is there adequate oversight for Toronto police, or do you believe there's too much oversight?

Mr. Jon Reid: Ultimately, our members will come to work and do their job. As far as the oversight, I think our members feel sometimes that all the different investigative bodies—it's a lot to deal with sometimes. Depending on a decision they've had to make in a split-second, it could be investigated once, twice or three times, or even more. It's frustrating for them. But they continue to come to work and do their job, because it's a job they want to do, and they enjoy doing the job. They realize that when they take on that oath, that's part of the job, and that's just the reality of it.

MPP Kristyn Wong-Tam: Right. Thank you. And for yourself, Chief?

Mr. Nishan Duraiappah: My observation of schedule 1 to the act is that there is some streamlining that's occurring from the governance standpoint and the oversight pieces, which I'm an advocate for. I think there's already sufficient effectiveness in the act.

Some of the abilities to reduce the number of people on the oversight bodies or create ad hoc governance entities, to me, makes a lot of sense. To Jon's point, there is a perception, a feeling, that there is a lot over top of us, but I think what it has done is made the mechanisms provided more effective and streamlined, which I think we would welcome from the OACP standpoint.

MPP Kristyn Wong-Tam: Thank you. And just to clarify, the different oversight bodies do different things. Their scope and mandate are slightly different. So the SIU would do something that's very different from the OIPRD. Is that correct?

Mr. Nishan Duraiappah: That's correct. That's right.

MPP Kristyn Wong-Tam: So is it a matter of the need to sort of bring them all together, so that you have one

oversight body that does the multitude of different things? Because right now, you've got several bodies, and they all have a very specific line of sight on what they need to provide review over. Is that the type of efficiency—

Mr. Nishan Duraippah: Clearly, I think, a more streamlined set of mechanisms is always beneficial, so we're not repeatedly exposing our people to new systems one at a time.

I know, Jon, you probably would agree too that multiple different oversight processes are inefficient. Sometimes it's more procedural reviews, but they still have an impact on workflow and the individual, for sure.

Mr. Jon Reid: I couldn't agree more, Chief. I think part of the problem is, when we end up with investigative review after review on a particular incident, it's stressful on officers, it's stressful on their families, because although you have done nothing wrong, you're still being investigated again. So I think, to the chief's point, streamlining some of these processes and also putting timelines on them is very, very effective and, as the chief mentioned as well, efficient.

MPP Kristyn Wong-Tam: Thank you. At this point in time, if an officer is found to have—even if they're charged, not necessarily found guilty per se, they are oftentimes removed from service, but they're still compensated until an outcome has arrived, through the investigation or through some type of settlement if it's a dispute around labour. Is that correct?

Mr. Jon Reid: That would actually depend on the type of incident, and it would be up to the chief to decide—

The Chair (Ms. Goldie Ghamari): One minute.

Mr. Jon Reid:—how he wants to deal with it.

MPP Kristyn Wong-Tam: Okay. So it's entirely to the discretion of the police chief? Is that correct?

Mr. Jon Reid: As far as how he wants to manage his member, yes.

MPP Kristyn Wong-Tam: Okay. Thank you. And is that the same across Ontario? Or is that only within Toronto police?

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Mr. Nishan Duraippah: Just to top up Jon's comments, the current language in the act prescribes what a chief can dispense in terms of discipline or how they can manage the individual while they're going through oversight. That is a continual discussion point between the chiefs and, obviously, the labour environment in this regard. But at present, there's a very prescribed set of options that are only available for a police service to navigate an individual while they're going through those circumstances.

MPP Kristyn Wong-Tam: But it is still left to the discretion of the police chief, correct?

Mr. Nishan Duraippah: Yes, in certain cases. For example, the act does not necessarily permit me to terminate somebody if it's—under certain circumstances; it has to be a really egregious set of activities. Usually, it's at the end of the process—

The Chair (Ms. Goldie Ghamari): My apologies for interrupting. Thank you very much. That's all the time that

we have for this round. At this point, I'd like to thank our presenters: Chief Duraippah from the Ontario Association of Chiefs of Police, President Jon Reid from the Toronto Police Association. Thank you.

Also, a special thank you to the Toronto Zoo and Grant Furniss. I know that there weren't too many questions for the Toronto Zoo, but I just wanted to echo MPP Hogarth's comments. We really appreciate you taking the time to be here. Some of my fondest memories as a child growing up in Toronto were visiting the Toronto Zoo, so maybe at some point we can do a school field trip with the committee and visit the Toronto Zoo. Maybe we could see some of your hard work in action. Maybe we can do a committee field trip reminiscent of our school days.

Thank you very much. At this point, you're welcome to step down.

Interjections.

The Chair (Ms. Goldie Ghamari): Committee members, we are still on the clock.

BEEF FARMERS OF ONTARIO
ONTARIO SPCA AND HUMANE SOCIETY
ONTARIO ASSOCIATION OF POLICE
SERVICES BOARDS

The Chair (Ms. Goldie Ghamari): At this point, I would like to call up our next set of presenters to please come sit at the front. Just a quick reminder for our presenters that each presenter will have seven minutes for their presentation. After we have heard from all three, we'll begin with questions, with two rounds of seven and a half minutes for the government and the official opposition and two rounds of four and a half minutes for the independent member.

At this time, I'll call upon the Beef Farmers of Ontario. Please state your name for the record and then you may begin. You will have seven minutes.

Mr. Richard Horne: Good afternoon. Thank you. My name is Richard Horne. I'm the executive director of Beef Farmers of Ontario. We represent approximately 19,000 members in the province. Joining me today virtually from Renfrew county is Craig McLaughlin, our vice-president. We appreciate the opportunity today.

With respect to Bill 102, the entirety of our comments is going to surround the proposed amendments to the Provincial Animal Welfare Services Act, or the PAWS Act for short. Firstly, I just want to state that animal care is of the utmost importance to our members and our association. Beef farmers, like other livestock producers, uphold high standards of care for their animals in accordance with national codes of practice. They place significant priority on ensuring animals are healthy, safe and well cared for, not only because it's the right thing to do but because their livelihoods depend on it. Ontario farmers could not continue to raise and help produce some of the world's best meat, poultry and dairy products if animal care was not an absolute top priority. Healthy animals make productive animals.

This is why associations like BFO were such active participants in the development of the PAWS Act. Many farm groups welcomed its introduction as it brought an updated and more coordinated approach to animal welfare enforcement which included direct oversight by and accountability to the Ministry of the Solicitor General, something that was previously absent.

With the act more than three years in effect now, associations like ours have accumulated experience with its operation. We have a fairly good working relationship that has been formed with the enforcement branch. But BFO and many of our farm organization counterparts remain concerned with some components of the system, which we'll touch on. Primarily, the proposed amendments regarding statements of account, or SOAs, are a major concern to us. I know we've shared that with the government in the past. It's not that we're opposed to the proposal for providing clarity on costs and what can be recovered in removal and care cases. But the current guidance within the act is uncontrolled and highly subjective. This has resulted in some cases in vendors being selected for the care of removed animals that are ill-equipped for the job, fees charged for such services that significantly exceed standard commercial rates, and other costs incurred and charged back to the owner that could have been mitigated had a proper vendor selection and cost standard been put in place.

The absence of language within the act around the reasonableness of costs is a shortcoming in our view. In a recent case, the Animal Care Review Board, or the ACRB, was quite pointed in their decision, describing many of the costs incurred for the removal and care as being unreasonable. The ACRB also noted that there was no evidence to suggest that AWS maintains a list of appropriate vendors, standards or appropriate costs for services or any directive to ensure costs incurred are reasonable.

While the criteria around types of costs that can be recovered, which is the focus of the proposed amendment, are a component of the issue, how those costs are determined and then applied requires equal consideration. At a minimum, we think that AWS and the province have a duty to ensure that costs are warranted, reasonable, justifiable and backed by some sort of transparent procurement process that includes a cost standard.

I just want to be clear: We are asking the province to ensure that costs incurred demonstrate that they are warranted, justified and reasonable. That doesn't mean negating actions that an animal owner may or may not have taken in the interests of animal welfare, but like any enforcement system, decisions are made by individuals prone to error, particularly in the absence of robust standard operating procedures, which is why the tribunal function—in this case, the ACRB—is important.

Ensuring consistency is always a goal to strive for, which, again, is part of the proposed amendments. It's unclear to us, though, what criteria will be used with respect to the ACRB's ability to confirm, vary or revoke statements of account. Broadly, we don't support amendments that would limit the tribunal's authority to determine whether enforcement actions or the statements are

reasonable and/or justified. The separation of enforcement from the independent adjudication process and the enforcement function is important, particularly when it includes discretionary authority.

With respect to the proposal regarding unpaid statements about accounts to be collected as government debt, we really don't have issue with that, but we would argue that in many cases other options could be taken before it comes to that. If removed animals are fit for transport and then sold, the costs applied could mitigate any potential debt owing to the crown.

What we really would like to avoid is the whole case of foster farms, where animals are actually removed. It shouldn't be the default option. It should be employed as a last result. Animal care can be compromised in many cases, rather than improved, for commercial livestock during multiple transports and stays at farms or other locations that aren't suitable for livestock.

Potential appeals and other challenges that can come from extending the foster farm timeline only add costs along the way and in many instances extend beyond the market value of the animals. Moving herds to new farms also introduces a biosecurity risk, which we're very concerned about. Ultimately, I think our position is that there needs to be more discussion about the process, once removal has been determined, that that's the best case and how that's actually accomplished. In Manitoba, for example, welfare enforcement for livestock is separated from companion animals and it's managed by their ministry of agriculture, which we think is something Ontario should investigate.

Regarding the tribunal appeal windows, we're very supportive of the proposed change to allow an extension—

The Chair (Ms. Goldie Ghamari): One minute.

Mr. Richard Horne:—on the ACRB appeal window beyond five business days. Farmers who are unfamiliar with the legislation need time to consult, potentially retain counsel, evaluate the merits of the appeal and formulate a response. There are lots of examples in other pieces of legislation and in other animal welfare legislation in other provinces that have a longer window.

I don't have a lot of time so I would say we have a brief that gets into more detail on our comments and concerns that the committee will be provided. In closing, I just encourage the province and the ministry to continue to engage with the ag sector directly in discussions around opportunities for improvement and collaboration. Thank you.

The Chair (Ms. Goldie Ghamari): We will now turn to the Ontario SPCA and Humane Society. Please state your name for the record and then you may begin. You will have seven minutes.

Mr. Drew Woodley: My name is Drew Woodley. I am the director of government relations with the Ontario SPCA and Humane Society. First of all, thank you for the opportunity to speak to the committee today.

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The amendments to the PAWS Act that have been proposed as part of this bill are a welcome improvement

to the Ontario animal welfare system. While likely not headline-grabbing, many of the changes proposed in this bill address issues of language and technical problems that have been identified in the current animal welfare and investigation process.

While the Ontario SPCA no longer conducts animal welfare inspection and enforcement, we are mindful of how changes to the inspection system can impact the welfare of animals. We are supportive of the changes and powers in the act which will allow animal welfare inspectors to act more quickly and with greater certainty to protect animals that are in distress and to provide for their care. This includes allowing animal welfare inspectors to immediately remove animals that are in critical distress. It also ensures accountability when an animal welfare compliance order has been issued by requiring that changes in ownership or custody are communicated to animal welfare inspectors. These are both welcome, meaningful improvements to the powers granted to inspectors designed to protect the welfare of animals.

Another key consideration, however, for organizations like the Ontario SPCA is what happens to animals that have been removed following an animal welfare investigation. These animals often end up in the care of humane societies and SPCAs until the owner comes into compliance or the appeals process at the Animal Care Review Board is completed. If the owner appeals either removal or the statement of account for costs associated with the removal and care of the animal, the time spent in shelter can become extended. While shelters act as an important and necessary point of care for animals that have been removed from situations of distress or otherwise taken into the custody of animal welfare inspectors, long-term stays in shelters are no substitute for a loving, caring home.

Like many elements of the PAWS Act, much of the detail of these changes will be drafted as regulations if the amendments are passed. There are several obvious points of improvement that are referred to in the proposed amendments that will likely become part of the regulations, such as including the cost of removal and transportation of animals in the statement of account. Many of the changes proposed in the amendments will provide greater certainty to the Animal Care Review Board appeals process, ideally streamlining and shortening the length of time it takes for the appeals process to come to completion. This means animals will spend less time in shelter care and hopefully move to a forever home sooner.

In the development of other regulations such as changes to the timeline for the appeal of statements of account, the Ontario SPCA, like other animal welfare advocates, will want to engage with the office of the Solicitor General to clarify and develop the intentions of these regulations. We will approach this with the needs of animals central to our focus. For example, the proposed amendments to provide greater flexibility to determine the length of time during which a statement of account appeal can proceed: As I've mentioned, we obviously do not want animals to spend any more time in shelter care than is required. However, if

this is a case of slow is smooth and smooth is fast, where a slight increase at the outset of the process can shorten it overall, we would be open to discussing how to best balance the care of animals against the realities of the appeals process.

On all of these issues, we welcome engaging with the Solicitor General to help develop these regulations and to provide analysis and alternatives to ensure the best care possible for animals that come into our custody. We also look forward to the opportunity that this regulation development process may provide to broaden and strengthen the standards of care for animals in the province.

When originally enacted, the PAWS Act provided significant provisions for the development of regulations to address a wide array of animal welfare problems, some of which have not yet been addressed. As the Solicitor General will be engaging in the process of developing new regulations, it is our hope that this process can go beyond those connected to the proposed amendments and include other animal welfare issues that we and other animal welfare organizations have identified. There are a number of issues that are considered high priority by the Ontario SPCA and other animal welfare organizations in the province that can be addressed through regulations under the PAWS Act. This includes banning the non-therapeutic use of cosmetic veterinary procedures, such as feline declawing, or addressing the rise in puppy mills that has been seen in the province in recent years, where dogs are overbred in often horrendous conditions and with significant impact on the health of the dogs. To address these and other issues that are affecting animals in the province, we strongly encourage the Solicitor General to engage with a broad range of animal welfare stakeholders to identify those existing issues that could be addressed through the PAWS Act by creating regulations and take this opportunity to develop a comprehensive package of regulations that could make significant improvements to the quality of animal care in the province. Thank you.

The Chair (Ms. Goldie Ghamari): Thank you. We'll now turn to our final presenter, the Ontario Association of Police Services Boards. Please state your name for the record, and then you may begin. You will have seven minutes.

Mr. Patrick Weaver: Patrick Weaver.

Okay, members of the committee, I'm coming with the happy news. I am truly honoured to have the opportunity to speak here today on behalf of the Ontario Association of Police Services Boards. It's also the last time I'm going to say that full name. We at the OAPSB have, for the past seven years, on volunteered time, worked through the process and committees and round tables and discussions concerning the new act. I have had the pleasure of spending six years at it and the last three years as chair of the OAPSB.

The association is the leading voice of police governance for the province. We serve our members and stakeholders as well as the general public. Our mandate includes helping the local boards fulfill their legislated responsibilities by providing training and networking

opportunities, by facilitating the transfer of knowledge as needed and advocating for improvements in the public safety laws, regulations, practices and funding mechanisms. We're basically their support group. Our membership includes police service board members, officers, law enforcement officials and other people concerned with public safety in the province.

Police service boards govern police within their jurisdictions primarily by establishing the priorities, objectives and policies for that police service in their community and then monitoring the performance of their police service and its leaders.

I am here today to express our support for Bill 102, the Strengthening Safety and Modernizing Justice Act, and specifically its provisions to remove the educational barriers for new police recruits. The OAPSB is committed to the continuing education of officers. We want them to be well trained and prepared to carry out their responsibilities. In the end, our safety is entrusted to them. The previous provisions of the act, however, had unintended consequences; they had the very real potential of furthering the limitation of the diversity of our forces and, as a result, limiting the ability of the communities to be policed by the people who represent them. We believe that Bill 102 will help address these issues by making policing more accessible to a wider range of candidates for whom post-secondary education was not an option. Officers who are familiar with the communities they serve have a better understanding of local issues and concerns, which allows them to build the trust and establish positive relationships with the people they work with. This in turn leads to more effective policing outcomes and a safer community.

We would also want to express support for the government's announcement to waive the tuition fees. The higher cost of tuition often deters people from joining the force, especially and particularly those from disadvantaged backgrounds or those with limited financial means. We may be losing a lot of talent there.

I am told that, in the next five years, one third of our police force size will retire. This has to be addressed. The police service boards across Ontario are going to have a Herculean task to bring more recruits in. Anything the government can do to help us would be truly appreciated. If we can help find and harness local talent with real lived experience from the community they're in, this will serve us greatly.

Bill 102 also includes the provision to recognize and award municipal and First Nations officers with the King's Commission, which was previously only given to the OPP. This is a critical step towards ensuring that all the police services in Ontario are recognized for their contributions to public safety. By acknowledging the important work of all police services, we can encourage collaboration and a shared commitment to safety across all the levels of law enforcement.

Additionally, we are pleased to see that Bill 102 includes measures to speed up the timelines for the appointments to police boards and to ensure that these boards better reflect the community they serve. This is a

critical thing. This will help ensure that the voices and perspectives of the local communities are heard and taken into account in the decision-making processes. Local police boards play an integral role in their communities, and ensuring that the candidates are credible underscores the importance of the role they will play. For our part at the OAPSB, we have worked with the province to collectively ensure that when individuals are appointed, they will have the training necessary to equip them to do this job.

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We are heartened to see that our request for training for new JOPs was also recognized. This provision in Bill 102 will ensure that victims are treated with greater sensitivity—

The Chair (Ms. Goldie Ghamari): One minute left.

Mr. Patrick Weaver:—and understanding throughout the criminal justice process. The DNA sampling and storage is going to help as well, without question.

And finally, we are pleased to see that Bill 102 has included provisions to equip officers with better tools, regulations and procedures to deal with animals in distress. It's much clearer now and will be much more reasonable.

In conclusion, we believe this is an important step towards modernizing the criminal justice system in Ontario and improving public safety. By opening up opportunities for new recruits, we can ensure that the communities have a greater chance of being policed by the people who serve them. By recognizing and awarding municipal and First Nations forces, we can encourage the collaboration. And by speeding up the timelines—

The Chair (Ms. Goldie Ghamari): Thank you very much, Mr. Weaver. My apologies. I have to cut you off. It's seven minutes.

We'll now turn to the NDP for their questions. MPP Stevens.

Mrs. Jennifer (Jennie) Stevens: Thank you, Madam Chair. Through you, to Mr. Weaver: I saw you flip through about three pages. You didn't get a chance to highlight on a couple of pages. Would you like to elaborate on what you missed in your opportunity to be able to highlight—

Mr. Patrick Weaver: I brought copies.

Mrs. Jennifer (Jennie) Stevens: All right. If you'd like to elaborate or get back onto what you missed—

Mr. Patrick Weaver: I had a lot more to say about the DNA challenges. It's a wonderful thing that we're now going to store and contain these, simply for three basic human reasons. One is possibly bringing settlement, two or three years down the road, to a grieving family. It may help service with our challenges with Indigenous burial grounds and how we can deal with that properly. That was just the concern.

Mrs. Jennifer (Jennie) Stevens: Thank you for elaborating on that, because it's an important part of this act, actually.

I'm going to go over to the director of government relations for the SPCA. The main change here, in my opinion, is that now inspectors will be able to enter and search a premises where there are "reasonable grounds" to

believe an animal is in distress under the provisions in the act. It's defined in sections 30 to 33. What training or resources will inspectors require to make informed decisions regarding reasonable grounds of distress?

Mr. Drew Woodley: I think that will be under the purview of the Solicitor General, because the Ontario SPCA no longer conducts enforcement and inspection. That's not our bailiwick anymore. I think that's something that, as part of the process of going through the regulatory changes, should be brought to the Solicitor General for part of that package.

Mrs. Jennifer (Jennie) Stevens: How do you plan on managing the additional discretionary powers that have been given to the animal welfare inspectors?

Mr. Drew Woodley: Again, because we no longer conduct the inspections, that would be a question for the Solicitor General. Our role in the system at this point is really limited to—if an animal has been removed by an inspector, that animal needs to go somewhere, and in those cases where it's a cat or a dog or other small animal like that, it often ends up in the care of an organization like the Ontario SPCA or humane society shelters across the province. While the Animal Care Review Board process plays out, we act as custodian for the animal during that process.

Mrs. Jennifer (Jennie) Stevens: Okay. Great.

My next one is to the Ontario Beef Farmers and Richard Horne. If there are negative impacts that might occur from these changes, would you be able to provide or elaborate on more examples?

Mr. Richard Horne: Could you repeat your question please?

Mrs. Jennifer (Jennie) Stevens: Sure. If there are negative impacts that might occur from these changes in the act, would you be able to provide or elaborate on examples?

Mr. Richard Horne: Are you asking about the current act?

Mrs. Jennifer (Jennie) Stevens: Yes.

Mr. Richard Horne: Well, I think—and I would welcome comments from my colleague Craig McLaughlin on the phone—there have been instances where the vendor selection process for removal of livestock has far exceeded any reasonable rate on a commercial basis.

I think this is an issue, that livestock is different, and when you're talking about large animals, the logistics of removing, transporting and caring for said animals is much different than zoos or companion animals that you would find in homes. This is where we're asking for some flexibility and a little more discussion with the industry on how we can be collaborative and ensure that the process makes sense, that it's justifiable, that it's proportionate to what they're actually seeing on-farm.

With us—and I think I speak for the other groups in our coalition, aligned with industry standards of care, too—I think training is a very important piece of that.

Mrs. Jennifer (Jennie) Stevens: Thank you.

The Chair (Ms. Goldie Ghamari): Further questions? MPP Mamakwa.

Mr. Sol Mamakwa: Meegwetch. Thank you for the presentations. Perhaps, Mr. Patrick Weaver, I'll direct my question to you. I'm from far northern Ontario, and I know that when you talk about the police services boards—how does your association work with the First Nations police services boards?

Mr. Patrick Weaver: Very quickly, as I told you, I've been the chair for the last three years of the organization, but I actually brought the person who knows what she's talking about with me: our executive director, Lisa Darling.

I will answer this question, though. The one step or set of steps that we've made over the last three years was to attempt to invite the Indigenous boards into the OAPSB. We created an Indigenous seat on our board, and Lisa is presently working diligently to get it filled.

The Chair (Ms. Goldie Ghamari): One minute left.

Mr. Patrick Weaver: An exciting thing that we've just done is that Lisa and I are attending the First Nations' first or inaugural meeting of boards for the country and we will be speaking at that and hopefully recruiting at the same time.

Mr. Sol Mamakwa: Amazing. Okay.

Lisa, do you have any comments on that?

Ms. Lisa Darling: Yes, thank you. We—

The Chair (Ms. Goldie Ghamari): Could you just please state your name for Hansard before you begin? Thank you.

Ms. Lisa Darling: I'm sorry. Lisa Darling.

With the CSPA, there will be more First Nations police services boards than ever before. Under that act, obviously, they have the option to opt in. We have our training that we're developing for boards across Ontario, including training for First Nations police services boards, as well, and we are currently working with the ministry in evaluating the mandatory training and have invited First Nations board members to be included in that, as well, to make sure that we have everyone's voice at the table.

The Chair (Ms. Goldie Ghamari): Thank you very much. That's all the time we have for this round.

We'll now turn to the independent member for four and a half minutes. MPP Blais, you may begin.

Mr. Stephen Blais: Gentlemen, thank you for coming today, and Mr. McLaughlin and Ms. Darling, thanks for attending virtually.

My first question is for Mr. Horne. I presume—and please correct me if I'm wrong—that when we're talking about removing animals from a beef farm setting, the likelihood is that it's more than one animal; we're talking about removing an entire herd or every animal on the farm. Is that a general assumption I should take?

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Mr. Richard Horne: Well, I would say that it's case-specific. The assessment of the farm in its entirety is usually part of the investigation, but not always, so there is a lot of discretion there on the inspector's side.

Mr. Stephen Blais: Fair enough. Let me go back, then. You were commenting about the lack of definition about cost structure: What's a reasonable cost, what's not, lists

of costs, perhaps, etc. How do other jurisdictions handle that particular issue?

Mr. Richard Horne: I can't answer that question.

Mr. Stephen Blais: Okay. The correction from your point of view to bridge the gap between what's in the legislation and what you're looking for: Do you believe that to be a legislative change, or is that something you think that can be handled in regulations afterwards?

Mr. Richard Horne: That would be a question for, likely, the Solicitor General, but in our briefing and in conversations with Sol Gen, we've commented that there are certainly legislative concerns that we have, one of which was the appeal window. There have been proposed changes there, but there are procedural or operational changes that may involve regulatory introductions as well, so I think there's a combination of approaches depending on the issue.

We have lots to say about the system in general, and I don't want to give the impression that it has failed; it's just that we've had enough window now to see how this thing is playing out on-farm, and we'd like to have some discussions about ways to improve the areas where we see gaps or concerns.

Mr. Stephen Blais: Sure. Okay. Thank you.

Mr. Weaver, or perhaps Ms. Darling, with the police services boards: What is the training dynamic for new members of boards? Is there a standardized set of training? How does that work?

Mr. Patrick Weaver: All yours, Lisa.

Ms. Lisa Darling: Thank you. I can advise that under the CSPA, there is mandatory training that will be required for all police service board members before they can join a police service board as a voting member. Those are mandatory online training modules that will be used for that. Currently, there is no mandatory training under the current act, if that's what you're asking. All the mandatory training will be under the CSPA.

However—sorry, I know that you were going to ask a question.

Mr. Stephen Blais: Apologies for cutting you off. Who determines what the training environment should look like, what the modules are, the extent of it etc.? Is that something your organization does, or is that laid out in legislation or regulation somewhere?

Ms. Lisa Darling: For roles and responsibility training, the mandatory training modules that will be developed, we are working with the ministry on those modules. That's what I was referring to in the last question as well. And we are also doing ancillary training—

The Chair (Ms. Goldie Ghamari): One minute left.

Ms. Lisa Darling: The OAPSB is doing ancillary training to enhance the practical application of the learning. It's roles and responsibilities training. There will be EDI training, human rights training. Those are all aspects that will have to be covered, mandatory, by all board members.

Mr. Stephen Blais: And do the chairs of the board or those in leadership positions in the board have a separate

series of modules that they have to participate in? How does that work?

Ms. Lisa Darling: There will be roles and responsibilities for each position on the board, so chairs will have specific roles and responsibilities, you're correct. And then there will also be additional training that we'll be doing. We're doing ancillary training to support that, as well as working with other partners like the CAPG to develop stronger training that way as well.

Mr. Stephen Blais: And does your organization provide in-the-moment advice, either legal advice or procedural advice, to boards or to chairs of boards?

Ms. Lisa Darling: Yes. That's what we're working on right now—

The Chair (Ms. Goldie Ghamari): Thank you. That's all the time that we have for this round.

Before I turn to the government side, I'd just like to remind members on both sides to keep their conversations to a minimum and, if they'd like to speak, to please take it outside. If I can hear you, it's too loud and it's difficult for us to hear what the presenters have to say.

We'll now turn to the government for seven and a half minutes. MPP Hogarth, you may begin.

Ms. Christine Hogarth: Thank you all for being here today. Mr. Weaver, thank you very much for your comments on the bill. I think you captured some of the very positive aspects of why we're bringing this bill forward.

Mr. Woodley, you worked with the government when we brought in PAWS. We will continue to work together on that, and dialogue will continue to happen with regard to animal welfare, because it is such an important aspect. We have to protect those who don't have a voice. So I appreciate the work that you do.

My first question is going to go to you, and then I'm going to go over to the beef farmers. Mr. Woodley, can you just talk a little bit about—I know that, through PAWS, we have inspectors who now took over that role of looking after our pets and our animals. I'm wondering if the OSPCA can speak to its relationship with the animal welfare service and the animal welfare enforcement environment.

Mr. Drew Woodley: Sure. As I mentioned earlier, obviously, the role of Ontario SPCA has changed very markedly in the last few years. Our formal role within that system is about ensuring that animals that have been removed have the appropriate level of shelter and care. Certainly, from our experience, and speaking to other organizations—humane societies, SPCAs, shelters—across the province, I would say it's a relationship of positive engagement. It's not perfect. There are issues that we're still working out, mostly around consistency, communication, cost issues, those sorts of things, that we really hope, as part of this process, particularly the following regulations—it would be a good opportunity to work with the Solicitor General's office to nail down some of those issues that have emerged over the years.

Where we come into it at this point really is about focusing on the care of animals that have been removed, and being, as you say, a voice for the voiceless.

Ms. Christine Hogarth: I certainly appreciate the work that you do. I know you have a lot of volunteers who work in your organization, so please pass along our thanks for their care.

My next question is actually for Mr. Horne. We've had a lot of conversations, and we want to, certainly, at the Solicitor General's office continue the dialogue with our farmers, because we have our companion animals, but we also have our livestock, which are certainly an important aspect to farming and to what we eat and just generally a lot of industry, especially in my riding. I guess the question really is—you represent 19,000 beef farmers across the province? Okay. And what I hear from farmers—you care for your animals, you want to make sure they're safe. That's your livelihood. One of the top priorities I hear is that animal welfare is important to you. So I'm just wondering if you can elaborate on some of the resources that Beef Farmers of Ontario provides to ensure its membership have the appropriate resources to care for those animals.

Mr. Richard Horne: That's an excellent question. I think animal care is a part of, a module of, almost every quality assurance program that's available to livestock producers in Canada. That extends beyond just the beef industry. We run seminars and training sessions regularly with our members. That includes funding research in the welfare space. Obviously, we're engaged with the national codes of practice, which include veterinarians, humane societies, livestock organizations, government and the like, on updating and constantly reviewing those codes, and then, as a sector organization, it's our job to communicate those requirements and recommended practices to our members, which we do regularly.

But again, to my earlier point about how unhealthy livestock don't make for productive livestock, this is inherent to the vast, vast majority of our members about best practices and that sort of thing. So I think with some—and I don't want to generalize, but there is some conflict with mental health on-farm, with some other issues that I think present unique cases, and just like—I don't want to get into policing, but that's part of this bill as well. How you approach farmers who may be suffering in that space I think is different, and it can have an impact on the management, on their operation. I think we've seen, with the SPCA before that, and now with Sol Gen, that's recognized. We need to do more in that space in how we approach those types of cases.

Ms. Christine Hogarth: I have one more question. This is actually a personal one, because I brought in a piece of legislation, a private member's bill—it didn't pass—on getting rid of puppy mills. So over to the Beef Farmers of Ontario: I'm wondering if you support targeting the bad actors like illegal dog-breeding facilities.

1640

Mr. Richard Horne: We're a supporter and advocate for animal welfare, but we don't represent the dog side of things or the companion animals. I need to recognize that often, farms have multiple enterprises. We are charged with the beef cattle representation, so I wouldn't want to comment on that.

Ms. Christine Hogarth: How about you, from the OSPCA?

Mr. Drew Woodley: Sure. That is actually one of the opportunities we want to explore with this bill and the regulation development process coming out of it. Puppy mills are horrendous, and they are a problem in this province. We, if possible, would love to see regulations under the PAWS Act that deal with them directly, and if the regulations are not sufficient, then stand-alone legislation to address them.

Ms. Christine Hogarth: Thank you for your comments.

The Chair (Ms. Goldie Ghamari): We have one minute left. MPP Dixon.

Ms. Jess Dixon: My question is for Mr. Woodley. It's good to see you in-person. I'll just drop off from MPP Hogarth's comment. I know that you were consulted on standards of care for outdoor dogs. What are your thoughts on government implementing a standard of care for dogs kept for the purposes of breeding?

Mr. Drew Woodley: We would certainly be supportive of that process and would want to engage with it actively. That, as I said, is one of the real strengths of the PAWS Act. It allows for developing those regulatory regimes and really getting into the detail of what is required. Certainly, we have been looking at other jurisdictions to see what has been done well and would really welcome the opportunity to work with the Solicitor General's office to develop those regulations and deal with the scourge of puppy mills in the province.

The Chair (Ms. Goldie Ghamari): We'll now turn to the official opposition. Who would like to begin? MPP Wong-Tam.

MPP Kristyn Wong-Tam: The first question will go to Mr. Weaver. Thank you for your presentation today. I wanted to draw your attention to schedule 1 of the bill. It specifically repeals section 72 of the act, which provides for the establishment of the Ontario Provincial Police Governance Advisory Council. In the previous presentation of the two officers who were here, one Mr. Reid of Toronto Police Association and one Chief Duraiappah, they talked about perhaps that the police had adequate oversight or perhaps too much oversight, to the point that it was burdensome and perhaps duplicative in oversight.

In your opinion as it relates to this particular portion of the schedule as it is being struck out, do you agree that that additional oversight body should be removed?

Mr. Patrick Weaver: No. What we need to understand—and this is a hard thing for the civilians of this province to understand, myself being one—these constructs are put in place because we ask these people who join forces to live to a higher standard than the rest of us. That standard must be maintained. There's no question. Now, could the boards be merged, as was suggested by the previous speaker, and could it become a bit more simplified? Of course it could. I think with some analysis, we could probably achieve it. But to say it's overburdening—no. This is a completely separate pillar of our democracy, and we need to recognize it as such. It needs to be over-watched as such.

MPP Kristyn Wong-Tam: Mr. Weaver, thank you. I want to be clear that it wasn't necessarily a suggestion of Mr. Reid or perhaps Chief Duraïappah that the entities be merged. I put that out as a proposition—

Mr. Patrick Weaver: It's not a bad one.

MPP Kristyn Wong-Tam: Thank you very much—because they felt that perhaps there was just too much oversight as police operations, that there was just more oversight than perhaps other professions. In your opinion, if it is not advisable for us to repeal the Ontario Provincial Police governance advisory body, why would it not be advisable?

Mr. Patrick Weaver: The governance body for the associations, for the services or for the boards?

MPP Kristyn Wong-Tam: In this case—

Mr. Patrick Weaver: I'm unclear here.

MPP Kristyn Wong-Tam: Sure, of course. Let me just repeat. Schedule 1 of the Community Safety and Policing Act repeals section 72, which provides for the establishment of the Ontario Provincial Police governance advisory body. So this schedule—

The Chair (Ms. Goldie Ghamari): MPP Wong-Tam, sorry. Do you have that provision? Perhaps it would be easier if we were able to provide Mr. Weaver with a copy of that provision so he's able to answer your question.

MPP Kristyn Wong-Tam: Sure. I don't necessarily have it. I have my own notes, which I'm reluctant to share. But it's specifically—I'll just—

The Chair (Ms. Goldie Ghamari): Because I just find it would be difficult for a presenter to speak specifically to a section if they don't have a copy in front of them. We want to just make sure that they're—

Mr. Patrick Weaver: I am going to promise you an answer. It's not going to be in the next six minutes.

MPP Kristyn Wong-Tam: Okay. That's fine. Maybe just for clarity, contained in the bill is the elimination of the Ontario Provincial Police Governance Advisory Council. That's being struck out. So that—

The Chair (Ms. Goldie Ghamari): I think Mr. Weaver's question was, does that govern the boards, the police or something else?

Mr. Patrick Weaver: I'm not sure any of us are aware, but I will find out and we will find the answer for you.

MPP Kristyn Wong-Tam: Yes, I think it specifically speaks to OPP governance, so it specifically speaks to Ontario policing.

The Chair (Ms. Goldie Ghamari): Are you able to answer that or would you like to—you're going to come back? Okay.

Mr. Patrick Weaver: I will have to research that.

MPP Kristyn Wong-Tam: Thank you. I wouldn't want you to comment on something that's not clearly understood and before you, so we'll just put a little pin in that.

Because oversight has oftentimes come out of inquests and inquiries, oftentimes reports and even through judgment—I think of the post-Andrew Loku inquest. I think of Justice Tulloch's requests. I think of even, for example, most recently Justice Epstein's report on the missing and

the missed individuals. Oftentimes, it's through judicial review that we actually get direction to ensure that there is proper and professional oversight of the bodies.

So my question—Ms. Darling, feel free to step in here, as well as Mr. Weaver—is that as this bill is written, it strikes out one body of oversight, and oftentimes those bodies and that instrument of oversight was put in there purposefully, oftentimes through the advice of some judicial review. Now, we have it being struck out, and it hasn't been clearly answered, not even in the Solicitor General's presentation, as to who asked for it and why is it coming out. But we know that effective policing—

The Chair (Ms. Goldie Ghamari): One minute.

MPP Kristyn Wong-Tam: —moderate policing, oftentimes requires that sort of professional accountability body. That's why we have police services boards. That's why we have even the police executives who sort of oversee the operations of the modern police force. I'm just wondering if you believe that it is proper in the bill that it should be struck out. Ms. Darling?

Mr. Patrick Weaver: Lisa?

Ms. Lisa Darling: Thank you. Sorry, just unmuting myself there. Again, I'm going to ask for some time to answer that as well. I believe you're referring to the oversight body for the Ontario Provincial Police for their provincial responsibilities, correct?

MPP Kristyn Wong-Tam: Yes.

Ms. Lisa Darling: As OPP also have contract, all municipalities will have detachment boards now, so they'll have police services boards at the local level. So I'd have to look into why that was struck and the reason behind it—

The Chair (Ms. Goldie Ghamari): Thank you. That's all the time that we have for this round.

We'll now turn to the independent member for four and a half minutes. MPP Blais, you may begin.

Mr. Stephen Blais: Ms. Darling, in our last round, you were beginning to talk about the kind of real-time advice or counsel that may be provided by your organization to police services boards, so I'm wondering if you could just discuss that in a minute or two.

1650

Ms. Lisa Darling: Certainly. Thank you for the question. I joined the OAPSB in May of this year. We have hired two new staff members as well, and we are currently working on developing repositories and, essentially, communication portals for boards to share information with each other and for us to share information with them. The reality is, as we all know, communication is the key to everything, and we need to provide easier access to communication in real time for individuals so that boards aren't waiting to hear back; they can actually push information out, and we can share information immediately with them. That's one of the things we're working on right now.

We're also developing more training so that people are better prepared in the first place, and we're also developing scenario-based training so that people aren't

learning in crisis; they're actually practising this before those issues arise.

Mr. Stephen Blais: So on the scenario-based training—and I appreciate this question might be sensitive—last year, as you probably know, there was some controversy in Ottawa with the dismissal of the chief and then unilateral hiring of a new chief by the former chair of the board in Ottawa. I'm wondering if that's the kind of situation that your organization would, in the future or perhaps in the past, provide real-time counsel on, or is that perhaps something that you want to do a learning module on for police services boards in the future?

Ms. Lisa Darling: I can comment that one of the areas we will be focusing on is the hiring of your police leaders and the ongoing evaluation of those police leaders. As we know, communication and knowing what's happening in your service and having clear direction and a good relationship helps to avoid a lot of these issues in the long run. So we're going to try to do it from both aspects; you're correct. If there's an issue, we will absolutely be supporting, and the hope is that we educate and provide opportunities to make it so that those situations are limited.

Mr. Stephen Blais: Yes. Fair enough. Okay. Thank you, Madam Chair. I don't have any other questions.

The Chair (Ms. Goldie Ghamari): Thank you. We'll now turn to the government. Who would like to begin? MPP Dixon.

Ms. Jess Dixon: Just back to Mr. Woodley: Obviously we've talked a little bit about puppy mills. While you have the opportunity, what are some of the main top priorities of the OSPCA as far as animal welfare and interaction with the government? What would you like to see?

Mr. Drew Woodley: Sure. Certainly within the context of this bill and the Solicitor General's office, like I said, we would love to see this process embrace a broader spectrum of issues. A top priority for us in addition to puppy mills: I mentioned cosmetic procedures—for example, feline declawing, which sounds fairly benign, but in fact, they're amputating the first knuckle of cats. It causes pain, it causes distress and it's not something that, in most cases, is therapeutically necessary and medically necessary. So we would want to see regulations put in place that address those kinds of cosmetic procedures, and the PAWS Act allows for that. It allows for those procedures to be regulated.

In addition, as part of the process around that and how we interact with the animal welfare inspector system, as I mentioned: the time spent in shelters. We would want to look at opportunities and develop concrete regulations, good regulations, well-thought-out regulations around issues like fostering animals. If the ACRB process is going to become protracted and we know we have reliable foster placements that we could put an animal in temporarily while the ACRB process is dealt with, what are the steps and what are the conditions under which that would be appropriate—working through regulations like that.

There are also issues more generally, outside of the scope of the Solicitor General, like breed-specific legislation that we continue to advocate for, access to veterinary care that we continue to advocate for. But I think more

generally, within the scope of this bill, what we would love to see is not just the Ontario SPCA coming to the table and engaging but the Solicitor General's office engaging with a wide variety of animal welfare stakeholders. Let's take this opportunity to look at a broad, comprehensive package of regulations that could address animal welfare issues in the province.

Ms. Jess Dixon: Thank you.

The Chair (Ms. Goldie Ghamari): MPP Bailey.

Mr. Robert Bailey: Thank you to all the presenters for being here today.

I've got a question for Mr. Weaver about the police service boards. Would the police service boards that you represent prefer a lot more flexibility in helping promote the choice of—when they're trying to replace vacancies on the local police service boards?

Mr. Patrick Weaver: I think the boards would be better served with local knowledge of people who may be appropriate. I do believe that the province should stay involved, because you can't run the risk of a board getting overloaded by a mayor; let's be frank. But I do believe the province could benefit from the recruiting abilities of the municipalities that have the knowledge of the people around them, yes.

Mr. Robert Bailey: Thank you. I'll defer to my colleague.

The Chair (Ms. Goldie Ghamari): MPP Coe.

Mr. Lorne Coe: Chair, through you to Mr. Weaver: Thank you, Mr. Weaver, for being with us this afternoon—and Ms. Darling. Thank you for your participation in the meeting thus far.

I'd like you to sit back a bit and share with us your views about whether you have any other policing issues you'd like to raise for future consideration as part of legislative or regulatory challenges to the act.

Mr. Patrick Weaver: Okay, you're five months in. This is your show.

Ms. Lisa Darling: Thank you. I don't really have anything specific to comment on at this time. I think it's very important, with the changes to the act and the additional responsibilities of boards, that the regulations are very clear going forward about responsibilities. We still have some regulations to be seen. Adequacy and effectiveness standards always are something that are of interest to me because it's nice to have a little bit of clarity in that area to ensure that services know what's expected of them and boards know what is expected of their services to be provided to the community. Those are two areas that I would like to have some clarity in.

Mr. Patrick Weaver: I would like to leave you all with this last thought. A lot of progress has gone into this new act and the changes in it, and it is better. It is not perfect. I honestly believe, whatever government is in power, the next question that needs to be asked is, what do we want our police service to be? Are they social workers? Are they narc deliverers? Are they peace and order, as was the original thought? We have to quit telling them, and I think we have to ask ourselves, what do we want them to be? Then, we can rebuild it properly. I'll just leave you with that thought.

The Chair (Ms. Goldie Ghamari): Any further questions? There's a minute and 20 seconds left. No? Well, thank you very much.

At this point, I'd like to thank all of our presenters for participating and joining.

I can speak on behalf of my dog, as a dog owner, and say that it's always great to see the OSPCA here. Please thank everyone and all the volunteers for everything they do to keep animals safe in Ontario. I think there are several dog owners here, so we all appreciate everything that you're doing.

At this time, you may leave, and we'll call upon our final presenter. Thank you very much for joining us today.

ONTARIO ASSOCIATION OF FIRE CHIEFS

The Chair (Ms. Goldie Ghamari): I'd like to remind the committee to please keep their conversations outside as we call our next witness. We are still on the clock and on Hansard.

Please step forward. For today, we have saved the best for last. We won't tell the other presenters. We have President Grimwood from the Ontario Association of Fire Chiefs. Please state your name for the record and then you may begin. You will have seven minutes for your presentation. Welcome.

1700

Mr. Rob Grimwood: Good afternoon. Thank you so much. My name is Rob Grimwood. I'm a deputy fire chief with the city of Mississauga, and I'm the president of the Ontario Association of Fire Chiefs. We represent all the chief fire officers of the 437 fire departments in Ontario, from the smallest volunteer department to the largest career and everything in between. I appreciate the chance to be here this afternoon, so much so that I was an hour early.

I will be very brief in my comments. I am here in support of all of the proposed changes to the Fire Protection and Prevention Act. I applaud you for doing so. It's a lot of work to change regulation, but it's so necessary. I've seen the fire service evolve so much in my 27 years that if we're not willing to look at our guiding legislation frequently and evolve it as well as our service, we'll simply fall behind, so I applaud you for this effort.

I'll speak quickly to the three points. The change to multiple deputy fire marshals is key. This seems like a no-brainer to me. Any organization that has the wording in such a manner that it can't afford to continue with two people being absent is susceptible to failure. Many fire departments have done the same thing and gone to multiple deputy chiefs. Depth is important and redundancy is important. We are enjoying the best relationship with the fire marshal's office that I can remember in my entire time in the fire service, and I think this change will strengthen them. For Ontario's fire service to succeed, we need a properly staffed and funded fire marshal's office, and I think this change is a big step. We applaud it.

In terms of the cost recovery, this is a really important change. It might seem relatively minor, but municipalities are struggling. This year alone, we saw municipalities face

extremely large tax increases, and it resulted in fire chiefs being told to do more with less, freeze budgets and reduce budgets. A lot of our fire departments are really small, and if they are susceptible to the cost of an order to close and the ramifications that come along with that—if I order a building to be closed and all of a sudden me and my taxpayers are on the hook for things such as security and fencing and perhaps heavy equipment or anything else to render that building safe without the ability to recover those costs—it could be devastating to a small fire department and significant even to a large one. So again, we fully support these changes. We think they're important.

Lastly, the fire commission changes: Not unlike any other tribunal or commission or board, coming out of COVID, we've noticed a really huge backlog, and it's taking a long time to get cases before the commissions. I guess what makes the Fire Safety Commission a little unique from another tribunal is if I go into a building and I find it to be unsafe and I order several changes under the fire code—I issue orders, maybe, for increased separations, exit lighting, what have you—and the owner of the building appeals, what it does is it freezes all of those orders. Our inspectors aren't perfect, and we think the appeals process in the commission is important, but what's really important to us is a quick resolution. We need it adjudicated. Maybe our original order was correct; maybe it wasn't. But what we can't have is a building continue in a condition that we feel is unsafe for hundreds and hundreds of days, which is what we've been noticing. So again, I applaud the changes to the Fire Safety Commission. We have a lot of faith in them. If they believe that changes to their quorum, structure and framework will make them more effective, then we concur.

My comments are brief. I support all of the changes, and I applaud you for bringing this forward.

The Chair (Ms. Goldie Ghamari): Thank you very much. We'll now turn to the government for a first round of questions. MPP Saunderson.

Mr. Brian Saunderson: Thank you very much, Mr. Grimwood. Sorry to keep you waiting, but we're glad you did, because we appreciated hearing that. I know from my municipal experience, cost recovery is always an important thing for municipalities, especially as budgets get tighter with costs going up. I know we participated locally in the Fire Marque program, which helped to offset some costs that were outside of the normal scope, if a fire required any special apparatus or treatments.

I'm just wondering if you can take us through how you think these specific cost recovery measures in this bill are going to help augment and support municipalities.

Mr. Rob Grimwood: I do think this will be successful. Ultimately, the Municipal Act does allow a municipality certain provisions for cost recovery as it relates to fire service operations, but what's laid out in the FPPA is much more clear. When I issue somebody an order under the FPPA, I'm clear and direct with them at that point in time about the cost recovery provisions, rather than trying to apply Municipal Act legislation way down the road. So we see this as a much more effective mechanism.

As an example, if a fire department issues an order for a building to be closed, we might be incurring costs to remove people from that building, house them temporarily, put up fencing, hire security guards. That really adds up, especially for a small municipality, so I truly believe this will be effective.

Mr. Brian Saunderson: Thank you. That's my question.

The Chair (Ms. Goldie Ghamari): Further questions? MPP Kusendova-Bashta.

Ms. Natalia Kusendova-Bashta: Welcome, Chief Grimwood, and also please pass on my regards to Chief Rizzi. We're very proud. Is she the only female fire chief in Ontario?

Mr. Rob Grimwood: She's not. But I believe definitely the largest city, for sure.

Ms. Natalia Kusendova-Bashta: Well, we're very, very proud of the work that she's doing, so please pass on our appreciation.

Mr. Rob Grimwood: I will.

Ms. Natalia Kusendova-Bashta: The proposed amendment is to allow for more than one deputy fire marshal and would support more efficient operations by ensuring someone is always available to execute the duties of the fire marshal, which is a common-sense measure. Can you just speak more to why this is a needed change?

Mr. Rob Grimwood: Absolutely. Under the existing structure today, there's one fire marshal and there's one deputy fire marshal. If the fire marshal went off for any reason and the deputy fire marshal simply became sick—and we all know that an illness can wipe out a workplace. It doesn't have to be COVID; it can be anything—the common cold or the flu. The idea that if me and another person who work closely together both become sick at the same time and it could literally shut down the decision-making of that office—it puts us in a precarious position. So that's one piece.

The other piece is, it's a big organization. From a succession-planning and depth perspective, simply having multiple fire marshals, and being able to better delineate roles and responsibilities and portfolios is really important to the success of the organization. I look at this and I'm stunned that none of us flagged this years ago, really, to think that an organization was dependent on two people and two people only.

Ms. Natalia Kusendova-Bashta: Certainly. So that goes along the line of capacity-building within an organization. How many fires in a city like Mississauga could you be responding to at the same time?

Mr. Rob Grimwood: It's all over the map. But I can tell you, in Mississauga, we have one chief and we have four deputy chiefs, and at any given time, we have two deputy chiefs on call, because we believe in depth and redundancy. So we practise exactly what the fire marshal's office is going to do, and it's for that reason. If we have multiple fires, we have two chiefs to manage it. If we have a really large, complex incident, the two chiefs can assist each other. Depth and redundancy are huge, and many fire

departments are shifting their management structure to that model.

Ms. Natalia Kusendova-Bashta: Thank you.

The Chair (Ms. Goldie Ghamari): MPP Jones.

Mr. Trevor Jones: Thank you, Chief. Understanding the complexity and the size variances of departments large and small across this massive province, I'd like you to think and speak on behalf of your fellow chiefs and, if you could just summarize—and I appreciate your brief summary. It allowed us to stimulate some thoughts and some ideas. Would the association have any very specific fire issues you would like to raise for any future considerations or iterations as part of legislative or regulatory changes to the FPPA? The needs of your members big and small.

Mr. Rob Grimwood: That's a great question. I will throw a few thoughts out. On June 13 and 14, the fire marshal's office is hosting something called Operation SAFER, which is smoke alarms for every residence. In Ontario, 133 people lost their lives last year. It's the most in decades, and it's mind-boggling to me. Again, I'm 27 years in my career. The idea that we would be experiencing more fatalities than less—it keeps me up at night. There's no reason for it. Homes are built better. Less people smoke. Less people have chimneys to heat their houses. There's no reason that we should be experiencing increased fire deaths.

1710

To the credit of the fire marshal's office, this two-day fire safety summit is not looking at what we've been doing to change behaviour; it's looking at what we haven't been doing. So if you look at what has changed behaviour in the past few decades, you think about use of seat belts, drunk driving, smoking, mental health—four things where you've seen a shift and a real paradigm shift amongst the general public. We've actually invited those organizations to come sit. We've invited Mothers Against Drunk Driving to come present to the fire service to say, "How did you facilitate such a huge shift in behaviour on such an important topic?" Because I don't know how to solve the smoke alarm issue, but I know that what we've been doing hasn't been working.

So fire safety education and smoke alarms is one. The other is the health and safety of firefighters. We experience far too many line-of-duty deaths because of firefighter suicides and firefighter cancer. We're working very closely with the Ministry of Labour.

The Chair (Ms. Goldie Ghamari): One minute.

Mr. Rob Grimwood: I'm the management co-chair of the section 21 committee, and we are hyper-focused on firefighter health and safety and how to reduce the prevalence of cancer and suicide.

Mr. Trevor Jones: If I could just add, thank you very much for sharing those experiences and insights. It's a benefit to everyone here in the committee. Thank you.

Mr. Rob Grimwood: Thank you.

The Chair (Ms. Goldie Ghamari): We'll now turn to the—unless there are no more questions?

Mr. Robert Bailey: I would just like clarification.

The Chair (Ms. Goldie Ghamari): Okay, MPP Bailey for 40 seconds.

Mr. Robert Bailey: Yes. Those 123 deaths—now, is that CO₂ as well as smoke detectors? I wasn't sure.

Mr. Rob Grimwood: So it's 133 fire deaths. Most would be smoke inhalation, some would be burns, but where the cause of death was definitively due to a fire.

Mr. Robert Bailey: Okay. Thank you.

The Chair (Ms. Goldie Ghamari): We'll now turn to the official opposition. MPP Stevens, you may begin.

Mrs. Jennifer (Jennie) Stevens: Thank you, Chief, for coming this afternoon and your presentation. It was brief but it was very impactful. Seeing you come in the door first is often what we see firefighters do, so I commend you on that. They're usually the ones first running into a fire and we're running out. That's the big saying. I know that it's said throughout your brothers and sisters, throughout your fire services.

My son-in-law-to-be is actually a Toronto firefighter, and we take great pride in what he does. I've worked with Chief Upper for the St. Catharines fire department. I was on the fire safety plan many years ago, but it seems like yesterday.

I've just got a few questions in regard to this act. The extension of the appeal timeline beyond the prescribed 30 days has been introduced. Could you share insight on what motivated this change, maybe, and how it could benefit the individuals or the entities involved?

Mr. Rob Grimwood: So it's a great question because there are two things proposed: one is reducing the quorum and one is extending the timeline. I'm speaking about quick resolution so it would seem that extending the timeline is somewhat counterintuitive, but we have put our faith in the commission to say that they're finding balance; that by reducing the quorum and extending the timeline, they're going to achieve the balance of fairness with the person appealing while still making sure that we reach decisions much quicker. So we're supportive of the commission's proposal because we see it in totality. We think decreasing the number of people and increasing the appeal timeline basically function hand in hand to make the entire process more effective.

Mrs. Jennifer (Jennie) Stevens: So you think that removing two from the commission and going with a single individual—sorry, my voice is straining here. I don't know why. I usually have a hockey voice. Sorry about that.

It's kind of concerning in some sense, though, because it seems like—do you think it will be fair? Would the fairness be the same having one instead of three?

Mr. Rob Grimwood: I don't believe that it will diminish the fairness. The fire marshal's office provides a lot of technical support. The thing with a fire safety order or a fire order under the Ontario fire code is it's very technical and it often balances somebody's capacity to fix the problem with different resolutions, so we feel that one person on the commission working with the OFM's technical expertise to look at the issue from that technical expertise and technical lens will still find—I don't believe that it's going to put the appellant at any sort of unfair advantage. Our biggest concern is the timelines.

Quickly, anecdotally, every year, a fire department has to go into vulnerable occupancies and complete an annual inspection. We heard from a fire chief who inspected in March 2022 and issued an order which was appealed. March 2023 came around, and the appeal still hadn't been dealt with, and they weren't sure: "How do I go back into the same building when I still have an outstanding order a year later?"

In our view, the expediency of the timeline is more necessary than the number of people who are hearing the appeal.

Mrs. Jennifer (Jennie) Stevens: Great. Thank you for that. Are there any plans, do you think, for education or awareness campaigns to help people understand the implications of any of the changes? Or do you think that's even necessary?

Mr. Rob Grimwood: I'm not so sure it's necessary. We do a very good job, when we issue somebody an order, of explaining the appeals and cost recovery process. I think the education will be done at that time. The depth of the number of deputy fire marshals is really only relevant communication between the OFM and the fire chiefs. I don't think there's much public education necessary with this.

Mrs. Jennifer (Jennie) Stevens: Put all your focus in on those 133 deaths, right, for education?

Mr. Rob Grimwood: Exactly. We need the public education. We need to change people's behaviour. The reality today: If you don't get awoken by a smoke alarm and you're not on the front lawn when the fire truck gets there, the odds of us rescuing you are so slim. Today's buildings burn so hot and so fast. Working smoke alarms are everything. People can't rely on the fire department. I'd love to say that we do this amazing job of rescuing people and coming out with them over our shoulders, but that's only in the movies. Smoke alarms save lives.

Mrs. Jennifer (Jennie) Stevens: True fact, because I had a smoke alarm go off. But you know what I was afraid of? Calling 911, because I was embarrassed what my neighbours would think. So we've got to get that out, that it's not embarrassing for your firefighters to show up. I had a kitchen fire. I thank you for that, because it's true. My father walked in and said, "What's going to kill you is the smoke, so get out. Be more afraid of that." That's public awareness as well, and I thank you for bringing that forward.

What further changes, if any, would the Ontario Association of Fire Chiefs recommend in order to enhance the working relationships, just moving outward, with governance pieces?

Mr. Rob Grimwood: I'm in my second term as president. I served two terms as a vice-president before that. I would say that our dialogue with government today is as strong as it has ever been. We certainly feel we have the support of the Solicitor General and the Minister of Labour. Those are the two areas that we have the most dialogue with.

There's a lot happening in the Ontario fire service. We're going to be submitting some more briefing notes and position papers in the very near future about fire safety

and firefighter health and safety. I would suggest we feel that we have the necessary support. If we feel as though we have an issue that needs more attention, we're certainly not shy in terms of bringing that forward.

Mrs. Jennifer (Jennie) Stevens: Just going with firefighter safety and health and wellness, PTSD support: How important would it be for a member—

The Chair (Ms. Goldie Ghamari): One minute.

Mrs. Jennifer (Jennie) Stevens: Thanks—on the force, so that you can retain your front-line staff? Because PTSD, I know, in the fire department—I actually have a firefighter in St. Catharines who suffers from PTSD from several calls. I'm just wondering, what supports do you need?

Mr. Rob Grimwood: It might be our single biggest issue right now. I look at the supports twofold. There's before the incident, so there's ensuring that they have resiliency training. We train them on understanding what to expect and know what resources are available. Then there's the support that occurs after the incident, things like peer support teams and getting them the right help with psychologists and psychiatrists, and getting them the right care. The other piece of it is firefighters off on WSIB with PTSD, getting the help that they need, in many fire departments leave the fire department running short—

The Chair (Ms. Goldie Ghamari): Thank you very much. Sorry to cut you off, Chief. That concludes our time for this round. We'll now turn to the independent member. MPP Blais, you may begin for four and a half minutes.

Mr. Stephen Blais: Thank you, Chief, for coming and for coming early and sitting through those other presentations. In fairness, I don't know that I have a lot of questions relating to the legislation. But in Orléans, the community I represent, we're very proud to have four stations of the Ottawa Fire Services. In Ottawa, we have a mixed service; we have a professional service and a volunteer service. I'm sure the Chair would agree that the volunteer members in the three dozen villages in Ottawa are essential and critical to community life, and especially in some of those smaller villages like Cumberland and Navan and Vars, in the east end in particular.

The fire service has, at least recently, been a very well-paying job. It's a very difficult job in terms of both physically—and you were just talking about the psychological and mental aspects of it. I'm wondering what recruitment is like these days, if there are challenges in that regard and if there's anything government could do to support that effort.

Mr. Rob Grimwood: It's a great question. I'll start with volunteer firefighters. I spent most of my life as a volunteer firefighter. Volunteer firefighter recruitment and retention is hugely challenged right now. We ask a lot of our volunteer firefighters. They train more, their call volumes are up and the commitment level—it's really difficult to ask somebody to give that much time. With the OFM, the Ontario fire marshal's office, we've formed a volunteer firefighter recruitment and retention working

group. So I'll park that question, because that working group is going to come out with a series of recommendations that we'll bring forward, because I'm sure we will need support.

In terms of the career side, we don't have recruitment issues like the police are experiencing in terms of the number of people interested in being a career firefighter. But where we're challenged is in ensuring that the diversity of our fire service matches that of our community. We're just struggling to break down the barrier of the stereotype that we hire white males between the ages of 20 and 40. We need to do a better job. We need to think outside of the box. We need to collaborate with other partners. I know Mississauga is putting great effort into getting out into the community and making sure that everybody knows that firefighting is a great job for anybody and everybody, because we have the most unique and diverse community in Mississauga, and we need to make sure that our fire department represents that.

On the volunteer side, the numbers are a challenge. The quantity on the career side is really looking at our recruitment processes and who we're reaching.

Mr. Stephen Blais: I can appreciate that, for sure. I had intended to ask this question of the police chiefs, but I think it's relevant for you as well. I'm wondering, and you may only be able to speak to Mississauga, but generally speaking, what's the recruitment relationship like between fire services and the CAF, the Canadian Forces? Is there a pipeline or a recruitment relationship from the forces? If not, do you think that might be an avenue to explore?

Mr. Rob Grimwood: That's a great question. I know we have several members in Mississauga who work for the Canadian Armed Forces. Some were career and then came to us, and some continue to serve in the reserves.

The Chair (Ms. Goldie Ghamari): One minute left.

Mr. Rob Grimwood: To be honest, I'm not sure it's something that we utilize enough. I think it's the same type of Type A personality, problem-solving mentality that we look for in the fire service, so it's probably something we should maximize more.

Mr. Stephen Blais: I appreciate it.

Thank you, Madam Chair.

The Chair (Ms. Goldie Ghamari): I believe the committee has agreed to only one round of questions, yes? All right.

At this point, I'd like to thank you, Chief, for joining us and for your presentation. It has been very informative. You may now stand down.

At this point, I just wanted to remind everyone that the deadline to send in a written submission will be 7 p.m. on Wednesday, May 17, 2023. The deadline for filing amendments to the bill will be 5 p.m. on Friday, May 19, 2023.

The committee is now adjourned until 9 a.m. on Wednesday, May 17, 2023, when we will resume our public hearings on Bill 102. Thank you.

The committee adjourned at 1724.

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