



Canadian Association of Chiefs of Police Association canadienne des chefs de police

April 3, 2023

The Honorable Heather Stefanson
Premier of Manitoba
Room 204 Legislative Building
450 Broadway
Winnipeg, MB R3C 0V8

Sent via email

Premier Stefanson,

On behalf of the Canadian Association of Chiefs of Police (CACCP), I am writing to request an urgent meeting with Canada's Premiers to discuss several urgent and emerging issues surrounding violence and policing in this country. We request the opportunity to meet with you at your earliest convenience.

There are a number of items of elevated urgency, each with significant commonality and jurisdictional relevance to our collective Premiers. We therefore believe a meeting with your group is timely and appropriate. The following are matters which we would like to bring forward. Each of these is a public safety matter and each requires a consistent and integrated response. Our communities cannot have wellbeing without safety, and we must all work together to have meaningful impact. Our items include:

- 1) **The safety of our officers:** In the last six months, we have lost nine officers, eight of them to random violence. The number of murders of police officers has resulted in stark comparisons with countries like the United States, to which we have never before found reason to compare. There is no question that the degradation of discourse around policing and police funding, the lack of accountability in our justice system, and the significant increase in drug, gang, and gun violence have all played a part in escalating the danger for our profession.
- 2) **Lack of accountability:** The CACP has been raising concerns about the urgent need for bail reform. We have seen significant impacts due to legislative change (e.g., Bill C-75) and other factors, including the COVID pandemic, which have caused significant weakness in our justice system and its ability to protect the public. Over the last four years, we can track distinct spikes in the numbers of people released on bail, and incidences of violent offences committed by those on bail. We know that this is a topic at federal/provincial/territorial tables, but more action is needed to protect the community by ensuring the right people are detained when necessary.

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- 3) **Drugs, guns, gangs, and violence:** The spike in these issues, often intensified by mental health issues, requires a balanced approach and a coordinated and complete response of which includes enforcement of those committing the crimes. The lack of coordination and integration of appropriate solutions and a political tendency to endorse one-off solutions, contains more risk than promise.

Policing is at a cross-road in our nation. The stresses and dangers of the job, combined with the intense politicization of policing that we've witnessed at every level, threaten the integrity and trust in our profession and our ability to safely and ethically ensure public safety. The CACP is in no way suggesting anything less than full transparency and accountability by our members. However, external impacts, coupled with intensive escalation in violence and a criminal justice system that renders much of our work pointless by failing to sufficiently shield our communities from even the most violent offenders, are threats that cannot be indefinitely endured.

Our hope is to open a discussion with the provincial Premiers, to share data, and to work together to ensure public safety across all our livable, viable, and thriving communities.

I look forward to hearing from you on this request.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'DSmyth', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Chief Danny Smyth
President
Canadian Association of Chiefs of Police