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Ontario Strengthening Bail to Protect Communities from Criminals

The Ontario government is proposing changes to strengthen the bail system and protect communities by keeping violent repeat offenders off the streets and behind bars. These proposed reforms would strengthen the collection process for forfeited bail, introduce permanent Intensive Serious Violent Crime Bail Teams, support a comprehensive review of the bail system and move towards the establishment of user fees for people convicted or accused of a crime who use provincially administered ankle monitors.

"The current bail system is letting violent, repeat offenders back into our communities and onto our streets, at times just days after they have been arrested and accused of serious crimes," said Premier Doug Ford. "Enough is enough. We're cracking down with tougher rules, stronger enforcement and faster action to keep repeat offenders behind bars, where they

belong. We're also calling on the newly elected federal government to join us by strengthening bail to protect victims of crime."

Ontario is taking action to strengthen the bail system while continuing to advocate forcefully for the federal government to do the same, given its jurisdiction over criminal law. The actions Ontario is proposing, which will be introduced later this week, include:

Legislative changes that would improve and increase the collection of forfeited bail monies by requiring sureties to provide up-to-date information in accordance with future regulations

Introducing permanent Intensive Serious Violent Crime Bail Teams (ISVCBTs), made up of dedicated prosecutors who work with provincial and local police services to present the most persuasive case possible at a bail hearing in the case of serious and violent crimes, with a pri-

ority on repeat and prolific accused persons, including those charged with firearm offences. ISVCBTs also follow up with police service's bail compliance units, checking to ensure there have been no unreported breaches and that dangerous criminals are complying with their bail conditions

Working towards the establishment of a new user fee system for those subject to GPS ankle monitoring as determined by the courts as a condition of bail or release, with the funds potentially used to offset program costs or support victim services. The proposed changes would also help police access GPS information from this program for the purpose of monitoring people accused of or convicted of a crime

A comprehensive review of the bail system to make it more consequential and effective, including reviewing how to support better tracking of repeat offenders and improved administration.

"Our government is cracking down on crime by strengthening our bail system," said Attorney General Doug Downey. "We are giving prosecutors the tools they need to hold violent and repeat offenders accountable — with stronger bail teams, tighter monitoring and faster action in the courts, we are ensuring the justice system works to protect Ontario and keep communities safe."

Ontario continues to call on the federal government to urgently amend the Criminal Code by introducing concrete changes that will tighten bail legislation to protect public safety and keep repeat and violent offenders off the streets.

"Our government is taking decisive action to Protect Ontario and improve public safety on our streets and in our communities," said Solicitor General Michael Kerzner. "Our government has been a leader in advocat-

ing for meaningful reform of Canada's bail system. Until reform becomes reality, we will continue to support the efforts of law enforcement so they have the tools and resources needed to get violent offenders behind bars where they belong."

"Everybody in Ontario deserves to live in communities that are free from the scourge of violence," said Associate Solicitor General, Zee Hamid. "By strengthening enforcement, improving tracking and introducing specialized teams, our government is ensuring violent, repeat offenders face tougher consequences. These changes empower law enforcement and protect Ontario's communities, reflecting our government's unwavering commitment to keep criminals behind bars and Protect Ontario."

"Violent, repeat offenders continue to pose a serious threat to the safety of our communities. The Government of Ontario's pro-

posed reforms are an important step forward in strengthening our bail system and supporting the tireless work of officers in stopping the revolving door of crime. Our communities deserve a system that puts public safety first and keeps dangerous offenders behind bars — where they belong."

- Chief Nishan Duraiappah
Peel Regional Police

"These proposed changes are essential for supporting our frontline members. The securities and resources provided through this reform will not only enhance their ability to effectively do their jobs but also ensure that they have the necessary tools to keep our communities safe. We look forward to the comprehensive review of the Bail Act, which is a crucial step towards a stronger and more effective justice system that prioritizes public safety."

- Mark Baxter
President, Police Association of Ontario

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