

RE: Letter of Support — The National Centre for Police Excellence (NCPE)

Dear Colleagues and Friends,

I write in strong support of the Coalition for Canadian Police Excellence's proposal to establish a National Centre for Police Excellence (NCPE), and I do so drawing on nearly four decades of experience spanning national security, applied research, and higher education in Canada.

Over the course of my career, I have served as Chief Learning Officer for the Province of Ontario, as Director General at the Canadian Security Intelligence Service (CSIS), and as a professor at the University of Toronto and the University of Ottawa, where I have taught and mentored the next generation of public safety, intelligence, and policy professionals. I have also spent much of my later career advising boards and public institutions on leadership, governance, and organizational transformation. Few initiatives I have encountered in this time carry the same potential to reshape a profession as fundamentally, and as constructively, as the one before us.

Why This Matters — From Research to the Front Line

In my years leading research functions in government, I learned a simple but stubborn truth: institutions that invest in evidence, standards, and continuous learning consistently outperform those that do not, whether measured in public trust, cost efficiency, or operational outcomes. Policing in Canada has never lacked dedication or courage. What it has lacked is a coordinated, national, research-informed foundation for the education that precedes it. The NCPE addresses precisely this gap.

During my time at CSIS, I saw firsthand how national security and public safety work only when there is a shared professional baseline, common standards of ethics, and rigorous, ongoing training grounded in evidence rather than improvisation. Intelligence and policing are different disciplines, but they share the same underlying requirement: officers and analysts alike must be equipped with the judgment, cultural competence, and ethical grounding to make sound decisions under pressure, in service of a diverse public that expects both safety and fairness. The NCPE's model — embedding ethics, reconciliation, trauma-informed practice, and evidence-based decision-making into a standardized national curriculum — reflects exactly the kind of structural reform that strengthens both operational effectiveness and public confidence.

An Academic's Perspective

As a professor at two of Canada's leading research universities, I have watched policing-related programs grow in sophistication, yet remain fragmented across provinces, with no shared national standard to anchor them. This is not a criticism of any single institution; it is a structural gap that no individual college or university can close on its own, and one that the NCPE is uniquely designed to fill without displacing the excellent work already underway at institutions across the country. By respecting academic freedom, provincial jurisdiction over policing and education, and the existing investments provinces and Indigenous communities have made in their own training systems, the NCPE offers something rare: a genuinely collaborative national model rather than a top-down mandate.

Why This Is Meaningful for All of Canada, Not Just Ontario

The data cited in the Coalition's white paper are sobering. Confidence in policing remains markedly lower among Indigenous and racialized Canadians than among the general population, and public trust

in national institutions like the RCMP has declined in recent years. At the same time, Canadians are investing close to twenty billion dollars annually in policing. As someone who has spent a career translating research into public policy, I can say plainly: this is not a resourcing problem, it is a design problem. A coordinated national education framework — not a training academy, not a duplicate of provincial systems, but a research and curriculum body working in partnership with universities — is one of the most cost-effective levers available to improve outcomes across every province and territory.

This matters equally in Ontario, where I have spent much of my career, and in every other region of this country. A young recruit trained in Nunavut, Alberta, or Nova Scotia should graduate with the same grounding in ethics, cultural safety, and evidence-based practice as one trained in Toronto or Ottawa. That consistency is what allows Canadians, wherever they live, to trust that the officer responding to their call has been prepared to the same high national standard. It is also what allows officers themselves to move across jurisdictions, build careers, and grow into the leadership roles our police services urgently need to develop.

A Leadership Imperative

In my executive leadership work with public and private sector boards, I have consistently seen that reform succeeds when it is anchored in three things: independent governance, sustained investment in people, and a long-term view of institutional trust. The NCPE is designed with exactly this discipline — an independent, non-commercial body governed by policing professionals, academics, and community leaders, focused on the long-term professionalization of policing as a modern discipline, comparable to law, nursing, and accounting.

I have advised many organizations through difficult transformations, and I can say with confidence that the organizations, and the professions, that thrive over decades are the ones willing to invest early in foundational education and shared standards. Policing in Canada stands at exactly that inflection point now.

My Endorsement

I fully support the establishment of the National Centre for Police Excellence, and I encourage the Government of Ontario, the Government of Canada, and leaders across every province and territory to lend their support to this initiative. It is rare to encounter a proposal that is at once modest in its institutional footprint, respectful of existing jurisdiction and investment, and transformative in its potential impact on public trust, officer preparedness, and community safety. I would be glad to discuss this further, or to lend my voice in any forum where it would be useful to advancing this initiative.

Yours sincerely,

James Kendrick, PhD, ACC

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