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[Police Association of Ontario Calls for Urgent Federal Bail Reform to Enhance Community Safety](#)

TORONTO, ON (September 4, 2025)—The Police Association of Ontario (PAO), representing more than 32,000 police personnel across the province, is urging the federal government to take immediate action and reform Canada’s bail system to better protect communities from violent and repeat offenders.

“Every day, our members work tirelessly to ensure the safety and security of the communities we serve, yet violent and repeat offenders are routinely released on bail and returned to the streets,” said Mark Baxter, President of the PAO. “This ongoing threat undermines public safety, erodes confidence in our justice system, and puts both police officers and innocent people at risk.”

The PAO highlights a troubling rise in violent crime and recidivism due to current bail practices. Recent statistics show a 20% increase in annual violent Criminal Code violations in Ontario from 2019 to 2023. Meanwhile, nearly half of convicted offenders are reconvicted within three years, with repeat violent offences on the rise. Public concern is clear: [a 2023 Leger poll revealed that 91% of Canadians agree that repeat violent criminal offenders should have their access to bail severely restricted or revoked.](#)

To address these challenges, the PAO is urging the federal government to implement the following reforms:

- Expand the list of reverse onus offences to include crimes that are violent and serious in nature, such as car theft, home invasions, human trafficking, and drug smuggling.
- Expand the application of reverse onus provisions to violent offences committed while on probation or parole.
- Clarify the burden of proof for reverse onus bail hearings to ensure consistent application across courts.
- Extend consideration for prior violent convictions from 5 to 10 years and account for the time spent in custody.
- Codify an exemption from the “ladder principle” for reverse onus offences, making detention easier for repeat violent offenders.
- Require cash deposits for bail in cases of repeat and violent offenders to promote accountability.



- Add a new ground for consideration of detention for those with a history of violating court orders, thereby strengthening public confidence in the justice system.

“These reforms will help break the cycle of re-offending and restore faith in our justice system,” added Baxter. “Now is the time for decisive federal action—bail reform is critical for safer communities and a stronger justice system.”

To learn more about PAO’s position and recommendations for federal bail reform, click [here](#).

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About the Police Association of Ontario (PAO)

The Police Association of Ontario (PAO) is the recognized voice for over 32,000 sworn officers and civilian police personnel from 46 police associations across Ontario. Dedicated to advocacy, representation, and support, the PAO provides its members with vital resources, education, and a strong presence in legislative and policy discussions. Founded in 1933, the PAO has played a pivotal role in shaping the policing profession in Ontario, advancing safe workplaces, fostering healthy labour relations, and prioritizing the mental health and well-being of its members. For more information, visit www.pao.ca.