



## **OP-ED: Police Association of Ontario Calls on Official Opposition and Ontario NDP Leader to Apologize for Recent Comments**

**By: Bruce Chapman, President, Police Association of Ontario**

June 2, 2021 – Last week, Official Opposition and Ontario NDP Leader Andrea Horwath published Twitter posts that implied police were responsible for “killing” Ms. Regis Korchinski-Paquet. As President of the Police Association of Ontario (PAO), it is my responsibility to question the comments Ms. Horwath made on behalf of our 46 member associations and over 28,000 sworn and civilian police personnel across the province. On May 28, 2021, I wrote a letter to Ms. Horwath expressing shock and extreme disappointment in her comments – it can be read in full on the PAO website: [www.PAO.ca](http://www.PAO.ca).

Ms. Horwath’s choice of language in these posts was inflammatory and, importantly, has been proven false. The Special Investigations Unit (SIU) undertook a detailed examination of the circumstances leading up to Ms. Korchinski-Paquet’s tragic death, as is its mandate, and cleared all officers involved of any wrong doing. Ms. Horwath’s suggestion that, if she were premier, she would “overhaul the SIU to create real accountability” implies that accountability was lacking in this case.

Within the PAO’s letter, I encouraged the Ontario NDP Leader to review the full SIU report that details the findings in Ms. Korchinski-Paquet’s case to provide an explanation of where ‘real accountability’ failed to be achieved. Further, the letter included a direct request of Ms. Horwath to urgently issue an apology to Ontario’s policing profession for her uninformed and careless comments. Though a private letter of reply was received, it did not include an apology or a commitment to address her posts publicly. I am, again, asking for a public apology to be issued to our membership.

The PAO is aware of the recent concerns and questions raised by the public related to policing and, now more than ever, there is a need for open communication between policing organizations and communities. When anyone in a position of influence, especially politicians, amplifies false narratives and exacerbates tensions between the police and the public, it greatly hinders the opportunity for productive conversations to occur and for relationships to be improved. The PAO, our member associations and Ontario’s front-line police personnel are committed to being a part of meaningful and evidence-based changes related to the delivery of public safety-related services in the province, and we look forward to continuing to engage communities in discussions about how we can ensure their rightfully-high expectations are met and exceeded.