



Premiers to meet virtually with Canadian Association of Chiefs of Police

OTTAWA, April 18, 2023 – Canada’s Premiers are committed to the safety and wellbeing of Canadians. As part of this ongoing work, the Council of the Federation will meet with the Canadian Association of Chiefs of Police on April 21.

The April 21 meeting builds on the Premiers’ commitment to strengthen Canada’s bail system to better protect the public, and create safer conditions for Canada’s emergency responders. Premiers have called for meaningful changes to the *Criminal Code of Canada*, and urge the Prime Minister to quickly enact legislation to address these concerns.

Premiers also call on the federal government to renew and enhance the Guns and Gang Violence Action Fund, to support vital provincial and territorial public safety initiatives.

“All Canadians – and the police officers that protect them – deserve to feel safer in their communities and in their work,” said Manitoba Premier Heather Stefanson, Chair of the Council of the Federation. “Premiers look forward to hearing the views of the Chiefs of Police on public safety risks and threats, and their perspectives on the need for federal criminal law and justice reform.”

All provinces and territories are working with key partners in their respective jurisdictions to improve public safety and respond to the complex factors contributing to violent crime. Efforts to build stronger, safer communities include addressing gender-based violence, investing in mental health and addictions supports, addressing overrepresentation of some populations within the criminal justice system, and combating gang activities through prevention and intervention.

Premiers will hold their annual summer meeting in Winnipeg on July 10-12, 2023, where they will discuss a broad range of important issues for Canadians, including public safety and building stronger communities. Premier Stefanson will also host a meeting with Premiers and Indigenous leadership to discuss shared priorities and challenges and advance reconciliation.

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Background: see attached letter to the Prime Minister of January 13, 2023

For more information:

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January 13, 2023

The Right Honourable Justin Trudeau
Prime Minister of Canada
Office of the Prime Minister
80 Wellington Street
Ottawa, ON K1A 0A2

Dear Prime Minister Trudeau:

We write to urge that the federal government take immediate action to strengthen Canada's bail system to better protect the public and Canada's heroic first responders.

There have been a growing number of calls for changes to prevent accused persons, who are out on bail, from committing further criminal acts. The justice system fundamentally needs to keep anyone who poses a threat to public safety off the streets. And this starts with meaningful changes to the *Criminal Code*, an area solely within the federal government's jurisdiction.

As you know, this was the subject of an intense discussion at the October 2022 meeting of Federal-Provincial-Territorial Ministers of Justice and Public Safety in Dartmouth. This meeting led to a clear and unified call to action for the federal government to reform Canada's bail system.

A reverse onus on bail must be created for the offence of possession of a loaded prohibited or restricted firearm in s. 95 of the *Code*. A person accused of a s. 95 offence should have to demonstrate why their detention is not justified when they were alleged to have committed an offence where there was imminent risk to the public, as is already the case with several offences involving firearms. A review of other firearms-related offences is also warranted to determine whether they should also attract a reverse onus on bail.

This is just one proposal for much-needed reform, and we would welcome the opportunity to work with you and your government on this pressing and important issue. As premiers, we will continue to do everything in our power to keep the public safe, and it is our hope the federal government will do the same. With that in mind, we are once again calling on the federal government to make this change and commit to a thorough review of the bail system in Canada. The public safety of Canadians and our heroic first responders cannot wait. The time for action is now.

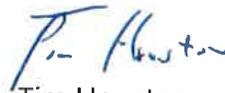
Sincerely,



Doug Ford
Premier of Ontario



François Legault
Premier of Québec



Tim Houston
Premier of Nova Scotia



Blaine Higgs
Premier of New Brunswick



Heather Stefanson
Premier of Manitoba



Caroline Cochrane
Premier of Northwest Territories



David Eby
Premier of British Columbia



Dennis King
Premier of Prince
Edward Island



Ranj Pillai
Premier-designate of Yukon



Scott Moe
Premier of Saskatchewan



Danielle Smith
Premier of Alberta



Dr. Andrew Furey
Premier of Newfoundland and
Labrador



P.J. Akeeagok
Premier of Nunavut

cc:

The Honourable Dominic LeBlanc, Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs, Infrastructure and Communities

FPT Ministers responsible for Justice and Public Safety