



Canadian Police Association 2014 Fact Sheet

Economics of Policing

There's no question that the current economic climate has put pressure on budgets at all levels of government, and as a consequence, there has been a tremendous focus on the cost of policing and public safety, and nobody feels that pressure more than the civilian and sworn members of our federal, provincial and municipal police services.

Over the past year, since the last time our members met with Members of Parliament, there have been some very real steps taken by all stakeholders to address this issue:

- The Canadian Police Association (CPA) hosted a conference last October which brought together police, academic and government representatives at all levels, where no topic or potential solution was considered "off the table;"
- The federal government has continued their efforts through the "Shared Forward Agenda," which includes the newly launched portal into policing initiatives across Canada;
- The Standing Committee on Public Safety and National Security of the House of Commons completed their own study into the Economics of Policing; and
- Provincial governments have made efforts to find innovative solutions, such as the Future of Policing Advisory Committees in Ontario.

The main talking point that our members hear during all of these discussions relates to the fact that 80 to 85 percent of the costs associated with policing in this country are directly related to human resources, or more specifically, to the men and women who make up a police service. Of course, it is impossible to separate those costs from the equation, since policing is a public service that is provided by people, one that requires a constant application of discretion and judgement that cannot be replaced, even with advancements in technology.

There's no argument that police salaries make up a significant portion of the cost, but there seems to be a false belief amongst some observers that the easiest solution is to cut those salaries, and everything else will fall into place. What those observers tend to ignore is the tremendous change that has gone into the job description of today's front-line police personnel. Police today are called on to serve roles as diverse as substance-abuse counsellors, mental health workers, marriage counsellors and youth intervention officers, all while maintaining their primary responsibility for community safety.

The question of salaries for front-line police officers in Canada is often the elephant in the room when we discuss the cost of policing. It's very important to note that during

every summit and conference, there is very little interest amongst stakeholders at all levels of the sector to make salaries the focus of discussion, and for very good reason, since those stakeholders themselves are best positioned to recognize that Canadian taxpayers receive tremendous value for money when it comes to their police services.

Further the statistics are clear; the increase in police budgets is not entirely the result of corresponding increases in salaries. Since 1980, while salaries for front-line police personnel have increased, the percentage of the total municipal budgets, across Canada, spent on policing has remained virtually unchanged. Obviously costs are increasing across the board, but salaries are not the main driver of these increases.

Another key point that needs to be addressed is the often-heard refrain that “crime rates are down, why do we need to spend so much on policing?”

It should always be noted that it is the investments that all levels of government have made in policing over the years that have had a direct influence on those declining crime rates, and policing may be the only sector where it is a commonly held belief that police should be penalized for their successes by having their budgets cut.

Despite the challenges that we face, the Canadian Police Association is eager to work with all levels of government to address these concerns, but we need the help of Parliamentarians and government to take significant steps:

- Recognize the need for additional investment and coordination, particularly by the Government of Canada, in the field of research for the police profession. Canada, as a country, has over 200 police services, at the municipal, provincial, federal and First Nations’ levels. Almost each and every one of these services is currently innovating new methods for tackling the challenges of community safety, however we lack a formal structure to collect, and more importantly evaluate the effectiveness of these innovations, which often means that all communities aren’t able to take advantage of the work being done on the ground across Canada;
- Focus on finding efficiencies within the system as it currently exists. There is no profession in Canada that is subject to and held accountable by so many political, legal, internal and civilian agencies. Eliminating some of the duplication, while still maintaining the necessary oversight, would improve the job-quality of our police personnel, while introducing important cost savings into the sector;
- Examine methods to streamline the processes that currently keep our officers tied up doing administrative work behind their desks, rather than having them out on the street, where the community expects them to be. Many changes have been forced on our profession by well-meaning judicial decisions that have led to increased workloads and processing times for some of the most basic charges our officers lay. A well-discussed example is impaired driving; a process that in 1980 took 1 to 2 hours has now increased to 8 to 9 hours for a single officer. These sorts of increases are simply unsustainable;
- Recognize that with the implementation of higher recruiting standards, additional and more complex multi-faceted training demands, and the implementation of provincial

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standards for ongoing in service training and re-qualification, the public's expectations have increased as have the expectations of professional police officers who legitimately deserve to be appropriately compensated while performing their duties in a challenging environment.

One aspect of the "economics of policing" that must be addressed at the federal level is the need for improved and defined guidelines regarding RCMP "takeovers" of municipal police services. Considering the costs associated with hiring and training officers at all levels of the sector, we have unfortunately found that requests for contract policing by municipalities often ignore one of the key assets in every service, the men and women who wear the uniform. Reform is necessary in two key areas:

- Ensuring that RCMP contract policing is not used as a bargaining chip by municipalities during particularly difficult contract negotiations; and
- Establishing key policies and procedures that must be followed by both the RCMP and their municipal partners with respect to the "lateral entry" of officers from services facing "takeover."

Police Associations across Canada have been leaders in our sector when it comes to addressing the challenges facing police funding, because, to put it simply, the members that we represent are all taxpayers too. We have seen, from our counterparts in countries like the United Kingdom and Australia, where deep budgets cuts have taken effect and the clear message is that Canada shouldn't be learning from their mistakes, we should be leading with our own, home-grown solutions.

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Parole Reform Targeting Repeat and High-Risk Offenders

The Canadian criminal justice system is a complex and interconnected process where action, or inaction, in one area can have unintended and negative consequences in another. The need to effectively target repeat offenders is significant because, as front line law enforcement officers know all too well, a defining reality of our justice system is that a disproportionately small number of offenders are responsible for a disproportionately large number of offences. Operationally targeting such offenders produces positive public safety results and the same is true of targeted legislation and policy.

It is in that context that the Canadian Police Association continues to propose the creation of statutory consequences for offenders who commit new offences while on conditional release and to replace the entitlement of statutory release with discretionary parole. These amendments are proposed in the belief that early release from a court imposed sentence should be a privilege to be earned and not a right to be demanded.

- **Creating the Offence of breaching conditional release:** It is critically important that there be an accurate record kept with respect to an offender's breach of conditions while on early release so that any future justice system decisions take into account such conduct. This reality is reflected in the creation of separate criminal offences of breaching the conditions of bail or probation yet, inexplicably, breaching the conditions of parole is *not* a criminal offence.
- **Require reporting of breach of conditional release by supervising authorities:** After the fact examination of crimes committed by repeat offenders such as Albert Foulston, demonstrate that breaches of conditional release by offenders are not always reported to the Parole Board of Canada which means their authority to suspend or revoke early release is neutered. Creating an obligation on a supervising entity, which includes offender advocate groups as well as CSC, would resolve this deficiency and enhance offender and institutional accountability.

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Employment Insurance for Police Women on Maternity Leave

The Issue

Police women on maternity leave are frequently and routinely subpoenaed during that leave to testify in criminal matters stemming from prior police duties. The practice of numerous police services in those instances was to have the day of the court appearance added to the end of the maternity leave, extending it by the amount of time lost for the officer to prepare for and attend court as required.

A few years ago Employment Insurance (EI) conducted an examination of this practice and essentially concluded it was a contravention of the EI provisions with respect to applicable earnings. Even though the compensation was provided in time only to make up for the leave lost, EI took the position that it amounted to additional employer provided earnings which were then subject to claw back from the EI payments as income.

Therefore if the member claims the court appearance in time compensation from the Police Service employer, it is considered as applicable earnings and deducted from their EI maternity leave benefit. There is no longer any ability to provide additional time at the termination of the maternity leave for female police officers in recognition of the time lost to court appearance. Essentially the officers appear in court, lose days off their maternity leave which cannot be recouped.

The Solution

The CPA would like to propose an amendment to the act and/or regulations governing Employment Insurance to ensure that if a police officer on maternity leave is subpoenaed to court as a result of prior police duties, that any compensatory time provided in recognition of that not be unnecessarily clawed back by EI.

This amendment would at provide a reasonable opportunity for our female colleagues to recoup the time lost with their families and also recognizes the unique challenges that they face trying to balance their obligations as a police officer against those new challenges they face as a parent; a time that most other Canadian women enjoy unfettered by their employment obligations.

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