



REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY OF NIAGARA
POLICE SERVICES BOARD

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The Honourable Yasir Naqvi
Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services
25 Grosvenor Street
Toronto, ON
M7A 1Y6

Dear Minister:

I am writing on behalf of the Regional Municipality of Niagara Police Services Board to encourage the Government of Ontario to re-open the *Police Services Act* and conduct a full review of the police disciplinary system.

The police disciplinary system has been a source of frustration for nearly everyone involved in the process, including police services boards, police services, police associations, public complainants and the public generally. It regularly takes months, if not years, for discipline matters to be concluded, and the delays are longer if a decision is appealed. This is unfair to all stakeholders, including police officers who are the subject of discipline charges.

Over the past decade, there have been several high profile examples of police officers who continue to collect annual salaries for many years while the appeals process is exhausted. Recently, there was a news article about a former police officer in Waterloo who was suspended with pay for three years and then sent an email to the police thanking them for his continued salary while he sat at home, played golf, travelled and took a course to become a firefighter. While this attitude and conduct is inappropriate and thankfully rare, it is indicative of shortcomings in the current discipline system, including the suspension with pay provisions of the current *Police Services Act*.

Citizens expect that the police will be held accountable for the manner in which they use their authority and any misconduct will be dealt with appropriately. The disciplinary process plays an important role in holding police officers accountable for their behavior. It also helps sort out situations in which officer misconduct has been alleged but in fact the officer acted appropriately. Public confidence in a police service depends on a disciplinary process that is capable of serving the interests of the community, the police officers and the police service, in a fair and equitable manner. Timely resolution of discipline matters should be a necessary and crucial component of any discipline system. The current system fails in that respect.

The Niagara Police Services Board respectfully requests that the Ministry consider a comprehensive and collaborative review of the police disciplinary system to ensure greater public confidence and increased accountability.

I appreciate your review of this matter, and I look forward to your response.

Yours very truly,

Bob Gale
Board Chair

- c. Vice-Chair and Members, Niagara Police Services Board
Chief of Police J. McGuire, Niagara Regional Police Service
Chairs, "Big 12" Police Services Boards
President, Ontario Association of Police Services Boards