

# Help keep Ontario's communities safe.

Ontario's Community Safety and Correctional Services Minister Monte Kwinter says no decision has been made yet on whether to go ahead with this misguided plan.

That's a good thing.

The first duty of any provincial government is to keep our communities safe.

Handing Ontario's parole system over to someone else is no way to live up to this responsibility.

***It's time the McGuinty government  
made a commitment to  
keep Ontario's provincial parole  
system in provincial hands!***

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# ***Community Safety Alert!***

Why does  
**Dalton McGuinty**  
want to give away  
the **keys**  
to Ontario's  
provincial **parole**  
system?

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## Our provincial parole system is at risk

Ontario's provincial parole system is there for a reason – to keep dangerous provincial offenders off our streets and keep our communities safe. It is one of the toughest parole systems in Canada.

But Dalton McGuinty and the provincial Liberals are looking at dumping our parole system onto the federal government. They think they can save money by handing responsibility for releasing and supervising provincial parolees over to the much weaker federal system.

## Gambling with your safety

Giving away the keys to our provincial parole system is a bad idea. Here's why:

- **Ontario has the largest provincial parole system in Canada.** The Ontario Parole and Earned Release Board (OPERB) reviews all parole and early release applications from the more than 8,000 offenders in provincial jails and correctional centres. That's 41 per cent of all provincially sentenced offenders in Canada – and more than the National Parole Board handles in seven other provinces and three territories combined.\*
- **Ontario's parole system is much tougher than the National Parole Board.** The OPERB approves only 22 per cent of parole applications. The federal board approves 60 per cent of parole applications for provincial offenders – almost three times the provincial rate.
- **Provincial inmates are more dangerous than ever.** With the increase in community sentencing since 1996, only the most serious provincial offenders are incarcerated. A tough parole system is more important than ever.
- **Ontario's system provides closer, more direct supervision.** Ontario has 125 Provincial Probation and Parole Offices. All provincial parolees are personally and directly supervised in their communities by a provincial Probation and Parole Officer.

*\* Provincial offenders include all those sentenced to two years less a day or less in custody. Like Ontario, Quebec and British Columbia operate their own provincial parole systems.*

- **Correctional Services Canada has only 18 parole offices in Ontario.** In many cases, instead of supervising parolees directly, it contracts supervision out to advocacy groups like the John Howard Society and the Elizabeth Fry Society.
- **Ontario's parole system is fully integrated with our provincial correctional facilities and the provincial probation system.** Provincial parolees and applicants are sentenced by Ontario courts and serve time in Ontario's correctional system. Most are also sentenced to probation, which is supervised by an Ontario Probation and Parole Officer – in many cases, the same officer who monitors the offender's parole. Often these inmates already have a significant history with the provincial probation office.

Each component of Ontario's system works closely together. That's the way it was designed. Giving someone else responsibility for provincial parolees only increases the risk of dangerous – possibly fatal – mistakes.

## It's just not worth the risk!

Why are Dalton McGuinty and the Liberals looking at handing over responsibility for Ontario's parole system to the feds? There are three possible reasons – and they're all bad.

- Monte Kwinter, Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services, thinks he can save \$3 million by closing the OPERB. That's less than 0.2 per cent of the Ministry's \$1.75 billion annual budget. And since parole is so closely integrated with the much larger provincial probation system, there will be virtually no savings from supervision.
- The government may think that once the National Parole Board is in charge, release rates will go up. This might help correctional facilities save money, but only by releasing high-risk offenders into our communities.
- Finally, they may think that by handing responsibility over to the federal government, they can avoid the blame when their cost-cutting results in a tragedy.

**Are any of these reasons really worth the risk to our communities?**