

Reaction to proposed changes to police oversight, a new and improved website, and more news from Ontario's Ombudsman.

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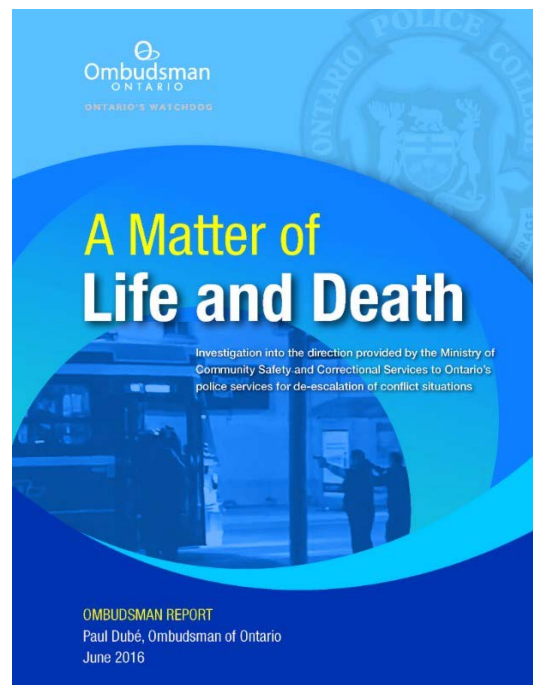


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OMBUDSMAN URGES ACTION ON DE-ESCALATION TRAINING AS PART OF POLICING REFORM

In a [column in the Law Times](#) this week, Ombudsman Paul Dubé says he is among those "cautiously welcoming" the proposed legislative changes to police oversight in Ontario, several of which reflect key recommendations he made to the province's independent review last year. On November 2, the provincial government introduced the [Safer Ontario Act](#), which would extend the Ombudsman's mandate to include all three of the province's revamped police oversight bodies, and require them to collect demographic information on interactions between civilians and police.

"We should all take note of these proposed reforms and monitor their effectiveness in promoting police accountability," Ombudsman Dubé writes in the piece, noting that the bill also proposes to bolster the Special Investigations Unit (which probes police-involved deaths and serious injuries of civilians) with standalone legislation that includes consequences for police services that fail to co-operate with it. These reforms were also recommended in Mr. Dubé's 2016 [submission](#) and in our Office's [2008](#) and [2011](#) reports on



investigations of the SIU.

At the same time, Mr. Dubé writes, a key reform the bill does not address is de-escalation training for police officers to help them deal with people who have mental health challenges or are in crisis, as he recommended in his 2016 report, [A Matter of Life and Death](#). Although all of his recommendations were accepted - including a new use-of-force model and mandatory training to ensure police use de-escalation techniques whenever possible before using weapons, "there has been little visible movement on this issue," he notes in the column. "Change must also happen on the front lines, where officers meet people in crisis face to face," he writes, adding that he is hopeful this potentially life-saving change will soon follow the new bill.

[Read the Ombudsman's column in the Law Times here](#)



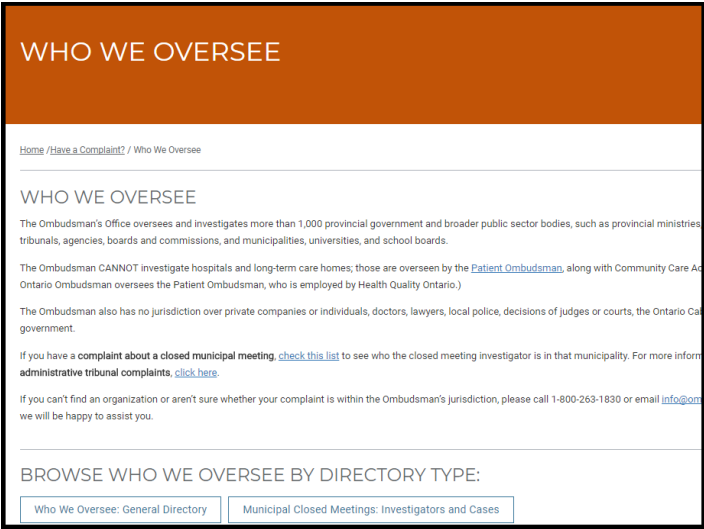
WE HAVE A NEW WEBSITE! TELL US WHAT YOU THINK

The Ontario Ombudsman has a new, redesigned website! We are excited to provide Ontarians with a site that is easy to navigate on all devices, full of useful information and with a fresh, modern look. Submitting a complaint still takes just a few simple steps, and the new design makes it easier than ever to find resources and answers to your questions.

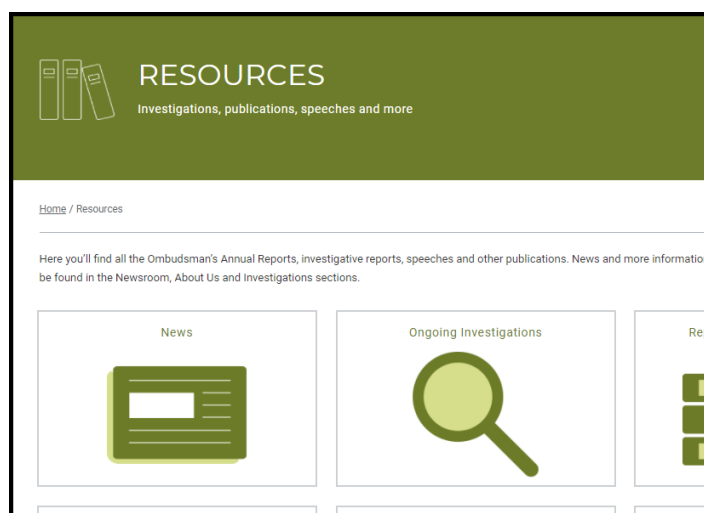


Finding [reports on our investigations](#) is straightforward, and with a new filter, you can browse by annual reports, systemic investigations, and municipal meetings reports, or read about how we've helped resolve individual cases. The improved search function makes it easier to find information.

Browse the [Who We Oversee](#) section of the new website to find out which public sector bodies fall under our oversight. The comprehensive list is organized in alphabetical order for easy searching and also features a separate directory of municipal closed meeting investigators.



Our [resources](#) for municipalities, universities, school boards and the other government bodies we oversee are all collected in the Resources section. You'll find brochures and



posters for download and printing, and we are happy to mail out hard copies to you, too.

We want to hear your feedback! Any questions or suggestions about our new website can be sent to thewatchdog@ombudsman.on.ca.

[Visit our new website here](#)



MESSAGE FROM THE OMBUDSMAN

Read the [Ombudsman's Fall 2017 message](#) for more about our Office's progress on systemic investigations, outreach initiatives with international Ombudsman offices and our team's work on improving municipal governance in Ontario.

[Read the Fall 2017 Message from the Ombudsman here](#)

OMBUDSMAN IN THE NEWS

- [Ontario proposes strengthening oversight of police](#) - The Globe and Mail
- [Ontario strengthening police oversight, redefining core police duties](#), The Canadian Press via CTV News

NOVEMBER OUTREACH

This month Ombudsman Paul Dubé hosted his fellow Officers of the Provincial Legislature for a meeting, shared more about the Office's work with the [Ontario Public Supervisory Officers Association](#) and presented to the [Ontario Undergraduate Student Alliance](#). Our early resolutions and investigations experts presented at the NDP's constituency office assistants' retreat in Toronto, and staff were also out greeting and speaking with the public at [MPP Soo Wong's annual health and government services fair](#) at Bridlewood Mall in Scarborough, at the [Ontario West Municipal Conference](#) in London and at the [Health and Wellbeing in Developmental Disabilities conference](#) in Toronto.



Ombudsman Paul Dubé with Officers of the Ontario Legislature. In the photo, from left: François Boileau, French Language Services Commissioner; Brian Beamish, Information and Privacy Commissioner; Irwin Elman, Provincial Advocate for Children and Youth; Dr. Dianne Saxe, Environmental Commissioner; Paul Dubé, Ombudsman; Bonnie Lysyk, Auditor General; David Wake, Integrity Commissioner; Greg Essensa, Chief Electoral Officer.

CAREERS WITH THE OMBUDSMAN

Are you an energetic problem solver with an interest in public policy? Our



office is hiring investigators
and early resolution officers.

[Click here to learn more.](#)

CASE SUMMARY

A man contacted our Office after being told the Family Responsibility Office would be garnishing his wages, which would force him and his family to be evicted from their home. When we raised these concerns to the FRO, their staff worked with the man to put him on a payment plan instead of garnishing his wages. Read more successful case resolutions [here](#).

BROADER PUBLIC SECTOR CASES

The Ombudsman's mandate was expanded to include school boards on September 1, 2015, and to municipalities and universities on January 1, 2016.

To date, we've received 1,923 cases about school boards, 5,734 cases about municipalities and 413 cases about universities.

Like most of the 21,000-plus cases we receive each year, all but a few of these have been resolved without need for formal investigation.

[Learn more here](#)

[File a complaint or contact us here](#)

The Ombudsman is an independent officer of the Ontario legislature who conducts oversight of provincial government agencies and municipalities, universities and school boards. Ombudsman Paul Dubé began his five-year term on April 1, 2016.

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