

Read about the Ombudsman's latest municipal investigation, upcoming outreach activities, articling opportunities, and more in the Ombudsman's April newsletter.

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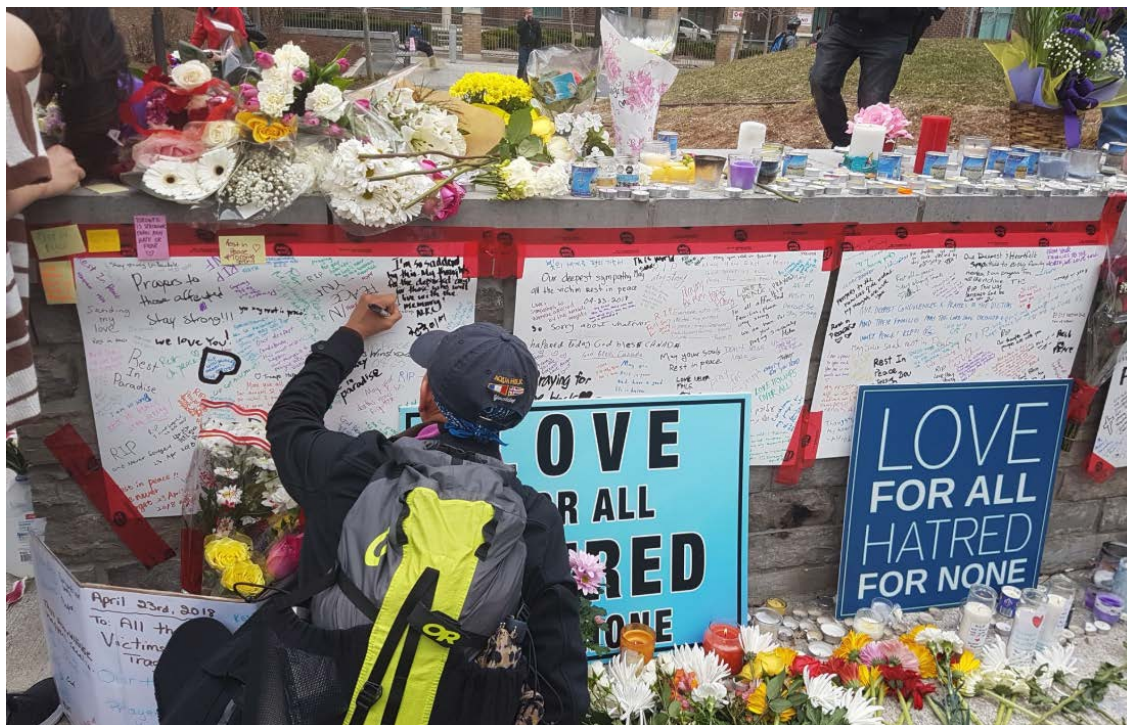
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MESSAGE FROM THE OMBUDSMAN FOLLOWING TORONTO VAN ATTACK

Our hearts are heavy as we grieve for the victims of the horrific attack on innocent pedestrians in Toronto on April 23 and think of the unimaginable pain their loved ones are experiencing. We are also profoundly grateful for the courage and professionalism demonstrated by first responders across the city who answered the call for their services.



A memorial with messages of support and condolences has sprung up near the intersection of Yonge Street and Finch Avenue following the attack on April 23, 2018. Photo courtesy of @thecoffeecop

POLICE DE-ESCALATION TRAINING IN THE SPOTLIGHT

Talk of "the cop who didn't shoot" -- that is, the Toronto police officer who successfully apprehended the suspect in the van attack without resorting to deadly force -- has helped bring effective police de-escalation techniques into public discourse.



"This is exactly the type of de-escalation ... and response to these types of confrontations that we hope to see," Ombudsman Paul Dubé told the [Canadian Press](#) in an interview the day after the incident.

"[The officer] appears to have assessed the threat adequately and appropriately, and this is the type of thing that our recommendations call for. The training should reinforce the notion that officers in those confrontations, and in those situations dealing with someone in crisis, should be always exploring options other than firing their weapons first," the Ombudsman said, referring to the recommendations from his 2016 report "[A Matter of Life and Death](#)."

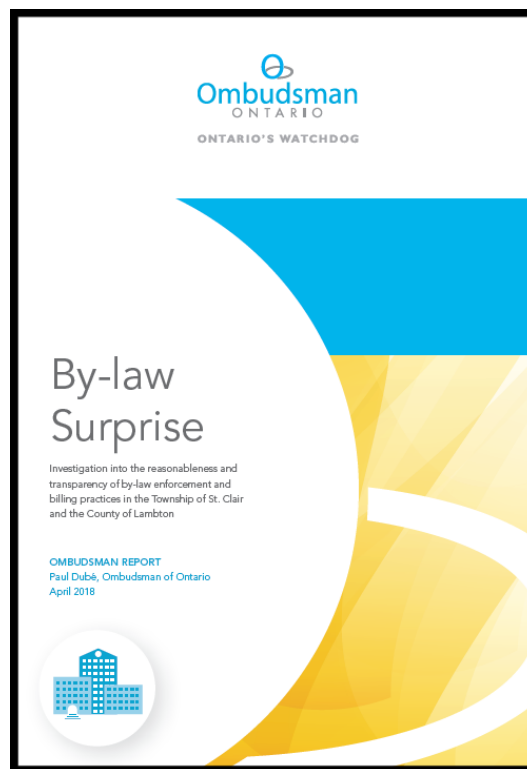
In early April, the Ombudsman welcomed [news that the Ministry of Community Safety and Correctional Services](#) was taking steps to implement recommendations from the report to improve how police use force in Ontario. "I am pleased to see the Ministry is moving forward on my recommendations to improve police de-escalation training across the province," Mr. Dubé said at the time. "A new use-of-force model that emphasizes de-escalation techniques, particularly in incidents involving people with mental illnesses or who are in crisis, will help save lives, and improve public confidence in police." [Read his submission to the province here](#).

LATEST MUNICIPAL INVESTIGATION EMPHASIZES NEED FOR FAIRNESS IN BY-LAWS

This month, Ombudsman Paul Dubé released the report on his [investigation](#) into the fairness and transparency of the

by-law enforcement and billing practices of the Township of St. Clair and the County of Lambton. In the report, titled "[By-law Surprise](#)," Ombudsman Dubé called for the township to apologize to a resident for surprising her with a \$11,700.63 bill for by-law enforcement expenses that it had no legal authority to charge.

The Ombudsman also called on the township to expunge the debt. "I am not suggesting that the township deliberately acted contrary to law, or that it is not entitled to take steps to ensure that residents and property owners comply with prescribed property standards," the Ombudsman wrote in the investigation report. "But in this case, the township's actions are without legal foundation."



The County of Lambton accepted all the recommendations directed at it, and the Township of St. Clair has agreed to all recommendations except two: the call to apologize and to expunge the resident's debt. Ombudsman Dubé said he will continue to encourage the township to accept the last two recommendations and will monitor and report on the progress of both municipalities to implement the recommended changes.

- [Ombudsman called in after woman gets \\$11,700 bill from St. Clair Township](#) - Sarnia Observer
- [Ont. ombudsman asks St. Clair Township to apologize in dispute over cars on property](#) - CBC News

[Read the full report here](#)



OMBUDSMAN SUBMISSION HIGHLIGHTS GAPS IN CORRECTIONS BILL

This month, the Ombudsman made a submission to the Legislature's Standing Committee on Justice Policy on Bill 6, the *Correctional Services Transformation Act*. While the Ombudsman noted he was pleased to see some of the key recommendations from his [previous reports](#) reflected in the legislation, he identified several gaps that could prevent effective reform. On April 19, Deputy Ombudsman Barbara Finlay presented the submission and answered the committee's questions. She highlighted gaps in the bill, including that regulations to the bill could allow certain correctional facilities to be exempted from the 15-day consecutive and 60-day aggregate limits on segregation, putting vulnerable inmates at risk. Our Office also suggested further improvements, such as enshrining "serious misconduct" and "restrictive confinement" in legislation, and ensuring contractors within the correctional system are not exempt from our oversight. [Read the full submission here](#).

WHEN IN DOUBT, OPEN THE MEETING

This month, Ombudsman Ontario published the results of three municipal closed-meeting investigations. The reports probed complaints regarding meetings held by the [Town of Fort Erie](#), the [Township of Tehkummah](#), and the [Town of Pelham](#). These cases help highlight when a gathering of councillors at a local bar might constitute an "official" council meeting; what is sufficient public notice for a special council meeting; and when municipal council might hold an in camera meeting under the "acquisition or disposition of land" exception.

Search the full archive of closed-meeting reports on our website

HERE, THERE AND EVERYWHERE

This past month, Ombudsman Paul Dubé spoke at [Autism Ontario](#)'s annual [Raise the Flag](#) event (see photo, right) at Toronto City Hall on April 3 to mark World Autism Awareness Day.

Ombudsman staff met with the public at the Toronto District School Board's community fair in Etobicoke for students with physical or intellectual disabilities and their families and at the [Ontario Coalition for Children and Youth Mental Health](#) summit in Toronto. Staff also spoke at the Society of Ontario Adjudicators and Regulators' two-day Front Line Adjudicator Training course in Toronto and to members of the Ontario Association of School Business Officials' Information Management/Privacy and Access committee in Mississauga.



Interested in having our staff attend your public outreach event?
Contact us!

PHOTO FINISH

A man who needed a new driver's licence for work complained to our Office that he could not get one because he didn't have adequate photo identification. He had tried to use his Canadian citizenship card, but it was rejected at the DriveTest location where he applied because the photo on it was taken 35 years earlier.

[Read about how we helped.](#)

Read more successful case resolutions [here](#).



WORK WITH THE OMBUDSMAN

Are you interested in a career that would help improve the lives of Ontarians? Our Office is currently hiring and we're looking for analytical, creative problem-solvers. We have openings for Early Resolution Officers and an Articling Student. [Click here to learn more.](#)

[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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