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Presentation to the
Standing Senate Committee on Social Affairs, Science and
Technology

Study: Social Inclusion and Cohesion in Canada.

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Members of the Senate Committee, let me begin by thanking you for inviting me here to speak. As you know, safety is something that is near and dear to all Canadians and I will try to give you a perspective as a Chief of Police, the President of the Canadian Association of Chiefs of Police (CACP) and as a person who has worn several other hats within my own community.

I would like to address this subject from the perspective of social inclusion. A barrier to greater community involvement (which is fundamentally what inclusion is about), particularly for groups that are vulnerable to exclusion (seniors, disabled Canadians, immigrants, visible minorities and women) is crime, or the fear of crime. Canadian police services, at the municipal level, play a key role in making cities safe. We do much more than just keep the peace, we are actively involved in outreach programs designed to foster a greater trust between ourselves and minority communities. Furthermore, the task of keeping Canadian communities safe involves a collaborative effort on the part of police services, community groups and individual citizens. This, in particular, is what I would like to focus my comments on – the area of promising practices and innovative measures being taken by municipal police services in the areas of crime prevention, community outreach and services provided to the victims of crime.

Having traveled across the country and currently sitting on an International Board, I would start by saying Canadian policing is of high quality and recognized internationally for its professionalism. In fact, so much so that many Canadian police officers are being seconded for input across the world.

Let me start with the timing of our current economic situation. Academia tells us that there is a close relationship with the evolution of policing to the financial markets. The relationship dates back to the original form of policing structure that was put in place to protect the financial markets. This relationship has existed since inception and, with the current turmoil within the world economy, it puts us in a unique situation. This situation can be good or bad depending on the lens you want to view it from.

I take the positive view in saying that this is the perfect time to innovate as to how community safety is delivered to Canadians.

The CACP has held workshops across our country on this very topic. It has become clear that community safety is much more than policing. This said, policing owns a significant piece, with some exclusivity relating to enforcement. Enforcement practices that can range from organized crime to traffic safety, and everything in between, are areas that we have made significant strides and continue to forge ahead in becoming more effective and efficient.

Now, let's go further and ask the real question that I believe needs to be better understood. "Who is responsible for community safety"? My belief is that 90% of the general public would say the police.

The "World Health Report" defines violence as the number 1 world health problem. Yet, as I sat on our Regional Health Board, on appointment from the premier of Saskatchewan, violence was not even on the radar screen from a health perspective. Nor, I believe, is it from a Canadian perspective.

Now this is not saying that community safety is the role of health but, in reality, it is everyone's role and for different reasons that require common goals and focus.

I am continuously in discussions as to how we can effectively deal with crime in our communities. It would appear that most people, politicians included, look at this issue from one of two positions:

- One side, by their own definition, as hard on crime (enforcement and incarceration).
- The other side as soft on crime (prevention and intervention).

Both views require tough decisions and both are absolutely mandatory to maximizing returns. I believe in a balance between both views, or should I say, being "smart on crime".

I often state, as police, we will not arrest our way out of our troubles. At the same time, we are not going to stop arresting. There are people that quite frankly need to go to jail.

When we started the community mobilization project in Prince Albert, I believe we have found a game changer and, if developed properly, demonstrates an innovative approach in dealing with intervention and prevention.

In a perfect world what would be needed for me not to have a job?? To answer that question, we need to understand what drives the need for a police response.

When I look at the calls received within my own police service in Prince Albert, Saskatchewan, we found that 27% of all calls were criminal in nature. Out of these 27%, 5 % led to an actual criminal charge.

This, however, leaves another 73% of calls to be an area, which we have defined, as anti-social behaviour. ...Behaviour that if left un-checked, or without accountability, often leads to criminal behaviour.

Anti-social behaviour is often related to addictions, domestic violence, disturbances, housing, mental health, etc. When I think of these issues, and look deeper, I have to ask myself

“how many of these issues would police be the experts in? The answer is, most often, none.

As a first response, it is natural for policing to take ownership. This is where the innovative change, however, is occurring. Ownership versus leadership. Policing services are taking on a leadership role in terms of getting the right resources to solve the problem and to reduce the chances of these issues re-occurring or to provide early intervention before serious crime can occur.

The majority of these 73% of calls are predictable; if they are predictable then most often they are preventable. But to be preventable we must move towards a structured approach....an approach that gives all agencies (law enforcement, health, education, social services, etc) the ability to see the whole picture and respond at a local or regional level and at an early intervention point. Unfortunately, today, we generally wait until people become entrenched in the system and then tell them what they need to do to fix themselves or their families.

Think of the reality of a multi agency response when someone is headed into crisis and ask them what we can do to help, when you know they are struggling!! Most people know what they need; many people with a chance and the right assistance at the right time can make good decisions. Yet we wait?

When we took our multi agency team of 11 to Glasgow, Scotland with our business plan, we found an area that had 15 key indicators that were the same as ours, and had 5 years of success. We took some of the things they learned, their best practices and tweaked them to make our model even better. We now, have under our belt, significant successes of which I can speak of later.

Our country is diverse. We need the ability to provide a community or regional response and effectively deal with anomalies through innovation.

We must change the argument from making expenditures to making investments.

To prepare for retirement, we track our investments and put our money where we will get the best return based on research and evidence. We then follow our investments to ensure our future is safe.

Why do we not use that same philosophy with safety?

Determine the stakeholders, make it a priority to determine the funding formula that is cost effective and can be replicated and then apply it to areas of need. I have spoken on our work over 100 times across the country. It is common sense but unfortunately not common practice.

I am Metis and have a strong relationship with our aboriginal community. When I was in Scotland, my light bulb moment was that our issues are not First Nations issues. They are marginalized people issues. If we are going to address long term success, it is back to the same investment principal. The earlier you invest the better your results will be.

We need to change our way of thinking as to what drives our business. We are not suggesting a new investment, instead what we are suggesting is a re-investment. Non-Government and Community Based Organizations tell us that there are significant opportunities for reinvestment within the existing economy based largely on the duplication of services. There certainly are more cost-effective and efficient ways. But in order to make the right decisions, we must focus on the intellectual piece.

If it is about money, I could present a few ways you could address it. The first would be a 1% tax on alcohol. Alcohol is by far the leading contributor to many of these issues. Alcohol sales are \$20 billion annually in Canada. *Think about that!*

This is all about applying a process to difficult problems within many of our communities and using funding as a seed to ensure we have common goals and priorities and as a catalyst for change. Buy-in would drive alignment. Changes at the local and regional level based in evidence and such change over time will

lead to efficiency and significant savings. This is consistent with an investment model versus that of an expenditure model.

As the CACP has traveled across the country, with our economics of community safety workshops, there are some common themes. In summary they are;

- Can we find a better more effective and efficient way?
- Community safety is more than policing.
- What role can the private sector play in the new alignment?
- We need to better promote what the police role in community safety is and the relevance it plays in maintaining safe communities.

These are the themes of our discussions, especially in light of economic uncertainties.

In closing I would be pleased to add more detail or answer any questions. I think we are in a good spot at a good time to maintain focus of services, but innovation is key to offer a better way in delivering services than how we do today. We presently have a great opportunity to remove barriers and generate inter-agency common goals and priorities that are cost effective and a more efficient way of doing business.

Thank you