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Presentation To House Of Commons –
Standing Committee On Justice And Human Rights

BILL C- 10 *THE SAFE STREETS AND COMMUNITY ACT*

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Let me begin by thanking each of you, Members of the House of Commons Standing Committee on Justice and Human Rights, for having me appear today regarding this very important Bill.

This is my first opportunity, as the newly elected President of the Canadian Association of Chiefs of Police, to present to you. For me, it truly is an honour and privilege. We may not always agree on issues relating to law enforcement, justice and public safety, but I want to assure you that we are very respectful of your positions.

My name is Dale McFee. In addition to my position with the CACP, I am also Chief of the Prince Albert Police Service.

Prince Albert, Saskatchewan is like many communities across Canada. We hear Statistics Canada reporting to us that crime is down in most areas of Canada, but as my law enforcement colleagues would tell you, public concern and crime severity indexes regarding serious and violent crimes has increased.

The Criminal Justice System is facing a serious challenge of confidence. Members of our communities from all parts of Canada, victims and police officers are losing a bit of faith in the ability of the criminal justice system to keep their families safe.

Therefore, as my very first comment I want to say that overall the CACP strongly endorses this bill entitled *“The Safe Streets and Communities Act.”*

By way of background, the CACP, through its member police chiefs and other senior police executives, represents in excess of 90% of the police community in Canada which include Federal, First Nations, Provincial, Regional and municipal, transportation and military police leaders.

The CACP continues to support legislative amendments which assist in making Canada`s communities safe and provide support to victims of crime. We have been supportive of many of the individual bills which were introduced in the previous Parliament.

Canadians need to know that their police and government officials, at all levels, are working together to ensure their safety. This is why I am here today. Canadians want to know that if they are a victim of crime, that the perpetrators will be dealt with fairly by the criminal justice system and will face the appropriate consequences for serious criminal acts.

When we talk about terrorism, organized crime, serious violent and/or sexual crimes, producing or trafficking controlled substances and many other criminal acts related to this bill - Let

me emphasize, we are talking serious crime here and this type of activity is not acceptable!

In dealing with such crimes, we need to extend protection to the most vulnerable members of society, we need to enhance the ability of our justice system to hold criminals accountable for their actions and we need to improve the safety and security of all Canadians.

I am here today with Vince Westwick who will be presenting as General Counsel to the Ottawa Police Service. In addition, Mr. Westwick is Co-Chair of the CACP's Law Amendments Committee. The CACP has 21 committees of police leaders who, above their demanding work in their home agencies and communities, work towards improving our ability to protect Canadians and most importantly, reduce the number of victims in our society. Our committees do not take this role lightly.

Deputy Chief Warren Lemcke, a member of the CACP Law Amendments Committee, in addition to his work with the Vancouver Police Service, will be appearing next week to discuss Conditional Sentencing. The CACP supports the concept of conditional sentences but agrees they ought to be reserved for the appropriate situation. Their misuse only serves to feed that lack of confidence in the criminal justice system.

My colleague, Chief Barry MacKnight of the Fredericton Police Service, will also be appearing on behalf of the CACP Drug Committee and will speak to the amendments related to the Controlled Drugs and Substances Act to address production and trafficking.

The CACP supports the Justice for Victims of Terrorism Act. The CACP is a long standing supporter of victims' initiatives, but especially so in this case. This act will give some sense of empowerment to victims of terrorism as they seek redress through the civil process. This *act* will also send a message to those responsible that they will be held accountable for damage that they do. This is most worthwhile.

I wish to compliment the government for proposing changes to offences and penalties associated with sexual crimes related to children. This is profoundly important.

On a further note, we need to ensure that we keep pace with advancing technology allowing law enforcement to more effectively deal with these same issues. I would urge all parliamentarians to assist us in this important matter.

In conclusion, We believe that Bill C-10 provides appropriate consequences for serious criminal acts and that it will strengthen the public's faith in the justice system. Canadians need to have their confidence in the criminal justice system

restored, perhaps reinvigorated. It is a critical element of Canadian life.

To critics of this bill, when it comes to discussing issues related to improving community safety, there is 'no right or wrong.' Community safety is everyone's business. Some see solutions as being hard on crime, others as soft on crime. Certainly, a balanced approach is needed.

Crime prevention is an important aspect which the CACP studies, again, having a committee dedicated to this issue. The economic circumstances facing all Canadians is a reality effecting law enforcement as well. It requires some very innovative thinking, new perspectives, as to how we approach crime in our communities. I am a very strong proponent of early intervention and community mobilization towards a common sense approach to reducing crime.

It is an area where the CACP looks forward to making a significant contribution with governments at all levels.

Mr. Westwick and I will be pleased to respond to any questions that you may have.

Thank-you!