



February 15, 2017

The Honourable Marie-France Lalonde
Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services
George Drew Bldg 18th Flr
25 Grosvenor St.
Toronto, ON M7A 1Y6
By email: marie-france.lalonde@ontario.ca

Re: Regulations under Police Record Checks Reform Act

Dear Minister Lalonde,

Congratulations on your recent appointment as Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services. We very much look forward to working with you on matters that relate to your new portfolio, particularly the *Police Record Checks Reform Act*, which has not yet been proclaimed but will have a significant impact on the nonprofit sector when it takes effect.

ONN is the convening network for the approximately 55,000 nonprofit and charitable organizations across Ontario. As a 7,000-strong provincial network, with a volunteer base of 300 sector leaders, ONN brings the diverse voices of the sector to government, funders and the business sector to create and influence systemic change. ONN activates its volunteer base and the network to develop and analyze policy, and work on strategic issues through its working groups, engagement of nonprofits and charities and government.

In March 2012, we asked the Ontario government for improvements in fees and timelines for processing police record checks, as well as greater clarity on when and why checks are needed. Police records checks are critical to protect our children, our seniors and vulnerable people with disabilities. But concerns about the potential for abuse have left many nonprofits over-relying on police record checks in their screening practices. This has driven up costs and lengthened processing timelines.

ONN partnered with the John Howard Society and the Canadian Civil Liberties Association, along with the Ontario Association of Chiefs of Police (OACP) to develop a consensus on changes needed. In 2014 and 2015, we worked with your Ministry's staff to develop a province-wide solution based on the OACP's voluntary Law Enforcement and Records Managers Network (LEARN) Record Check Guideline for police services.

While we were pleased to see the *Police Record Checks Reform Act* passed in 2015, it has not yet been proclaimed pending regulation development. Given recent discussions we have had with Ministry staff, we are concerned that the forthcoming regulations under the Act may in fact not address our concerns. It has now been five years since the Ontario Government made a commitment to the nonprofit sector to address fees and timelines for volunteer record checks.

This spring, the Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration will host a Volunteer Summit. The issue of fees and timelines for volunteers to obtain police record checks will undoubtedly arise at this summit as a key barrier that the Ontario Government could address to promote volunteering in the province.

We are writing to ask for a meeting with you to discuss the importance of this Act and accompanying regulations for the nonprofit sector that will address fees and timelines for processing police record checks for volunteers. I look forward to having the opportunity to discuss this issue further with you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Cathy Taylor', written in a cursive style.

Cathy Taylor
Executive Director

Copy to: The Honourable Laura Albanese, Minister of Citizenship and Immigration
 Adriana Ibarguchi, Director, Policy Branch, MCSCS