

## MP Ruby Sahota and Peel Police talk Bill C-22 in Mississauga

By **Riley Murphy**

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Last Friday, MP for Brampton North-Caledon and Secretary of State for Combating Crime, Ruby Sahota, held a press conference joined with Peel Police and various local representatives to discuss how the proposed Bill C-22 will help law enforcement investigate threats and keep Canadians safe.

Through Bill C-22, introduced on March 12, the Canadian government says it would strengthen the Criminal Code and give law enforcement and the Canadian Security Intelligence Service (CSIS) the tools they need to disrupt crime, investigate serious threats, and protect communities.

Bill C-22 contains two new investigative tools, the confirmation of service demand and the subscriber information production order.

Confirmation of service demand would allow police to quickly determine whether a telecommunications provider, including Internet service providers, has information that will assist in the investigation of an offence.

The subscriber information production order would be a narrower version of the general production order already in the Criminal Code; it would permit police to obtain only basic identifying information provided by subscribers to a service provider, such as their name, address, and email address, linked to a particular account.

"This bill is one of those steps as to how we can work together to make sure that we achieve the results that we want to see throughout Canada," said Sahota at Friday's press conference in Mississauga.

Sahota said that Canadian laws have not evolved at the same pace as the criminals who break them.

"That's why it's important that we take steps to address that. When it comes to the laws that govern how law enforcement and CSIS gathers information, Canada is woefully behind most of our allies. Our laws are stuck in another century while technology has moved forward. Criminals know this and they take advantage of it every single day," she said.

Sahota explained that criminals are using readily available technology that is part of our everyday use, "but they use them for human trafficking, online sexual abuse, extortion, child exploitation, fraud and many other crimes."

She explained that Bill C-22 establishes the legal framework for a modernized lawful access regime in Canada, something she says law enforcement and security services have been requesting for decades.

This new bill is informed by the former Bill C-2, but its provisions are said to be different.

"The act respecting lawful access, informed by views from stakeholders and parliamentarians, voiced serious concerns with the former bill. We listened to what they said and this new legislation, C-22, balances the need for law enforcement with the privacy rights of Canadians," said Sahota. "I want to be clear about what C-22 is not. It is not about surveillance of honest, hardworking Canadians going about their daily lives. It is about keeping Canadians safe and catching criminals."

Bill C-22 aims to help law enforcement obtain timely, lawfully authorized information when they need it, create a consistent and clear legal framework for service providers to allow them to comply with existing legal orders, and bring current laws in line with Supreme Court rulings to clarify that law enforcement and CSIS can receive tips, ask for information to be provided voluntarily, or use publicly available information to investigate crime and threats to security.

?Bill C-22 is a package of targeted reforms that tackles the world as it is, not as it once was. The bill builds on the work that we're doing in other legislation to combat hate, eradicate gender-based and intimate partner violence, and make bail stricter and sentences tougher,? said Sahota.

?In Peel, we are all too familiar with violent cases of extortion and human trafficking, and this new bill will give law enforcement the tools they need to better and more quickly investigate these cases so that they can make arrests and lay charges.?

Peel Regional Police Chief Nishan Duraiappah spoke about how this legislation ensures that the law reflects the changes in modern policing.

?The legal framework speaks to our ability to obtain data, search and seize information in a way that never existed. The legislation as it stands was in a pre-digital world, and those that are harming our communities right across this country are the ones that are taking advantage of the fact that we haven't had the tools to stop this,? said Duraiappah.

He added the Police's ability to operate in a fully digital world is absolutely critical for public safety.

?It does not overstep the elements of accountability. The core of it is lawful access that is judicially authorized, but allows us to achieve it in a better way,? he said.

He noted the previous legislation existed decades ago, ?and so the ability for criminals to access web-based digital platforms, to organize or conceal their activities is plaguing our environment.?

Duraiappah also spoke to what this new bill does not mean, explaining that it does not expand unchecked police authorities.

?If you were to tell me, what is the biggest public safety issue for you, whether it be repeat violent offenders, extortions, home invasions, auto thefts, in a world of geopolitical issues, hate crime, international, transnational issues, this bill is a core foundational element for our ability to respond to all of that,? he said.

Regional Caledon Councillor Mario Russo attended the meeting and added that this type of legislation is necessary ?to combat common and more complex crimes that we see in our communities.?

?With the surge of extortion, with the abuse and trying to take care of our most vulnerable, this type of legislation acts swiftly, and when we have our first responders saying that this is essential and these are the tools that they've been lacking as elected officials, it's our responsibility to step up and try and give them the tools,? said Russo.

In a news release, Mayor Annette Groves also voiced her support for the legislation.

?Modern investigative tools to help law enforcement combat extortion and organized crime are necessary to meet the challenges of the way criminals use modern technology. These measures are essential for public safety and policing, extortion, and speedy investigations. I support this proposed legislation that would provide greater ability to keep our communities safe,? said Groves.

Councillors from Brampton and Mississauga also spoke at the press conference in support of the legislation.