

Indigenous community safety

Mr. Sol Mamakwa: ᑭᓄᑦᑭᓄᑦ

This fall, Anishinabek Nation and the Nishnawbe Aski Nation declared states of emergency because of a public safety crisis. In NAN territory, the push for resource development has made communities more vulnerable to human trafficking, gang-related crime and drug activity.

To the Premier: What actions has this government taken to address the public safety crisis in First Nations across Ontario?

The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly): I recognize the Attorney General.

Hon. Doug Downey: We have taken several actions and engaged in conversations that are still ongoing. We're very aware that we do have some challenges, and we're partnering with First Nations to make sure that we are doing things properly, to make sure that we're doing things in concert.

We do have a table that meets regularly to deal with First Nations bylaws and the enforcement of those bylaws to try and find a way that we can work together to achieve a common goal of having everyone feel safe in their communities, make sure that the resources are there to follow through and make sure that that happens.

The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly): The member for Kiiwetinoong.

Mr. Sol Mamakwa: Conversations and tables are not good enough right now. First Nations have declared states of emergency, and this government has not responded.

I know that the Premier talks big about extracting from the north but ignores the crisis—the crises, actually, in mental health and addictions, public safety and health care.

When will the Premier start to value the lives of First Nations people and children over the dollar signs he sees on our lands?

Hon. Doug Downey: Our government does understand the unique social challenges facing First Nations communities, and we understand the need for tailored, community-based responses. There's almost \$4 million through the Roadmap to Wellness to continue supporting emergency prevention and recovery efforts through the regional Social Emergency Managers Program. We're aware of the recent states of emergency declared by NAN and other First Nations following incidents of violence, and we're working closely with our federal partners as well.

There's \$94 million over three years to improve the health and well-being of Indigenous and northern communities, including \$60 million for mental health, addictions and opioid services. Our government has allocated \$110 million to improve emergency preparedness for funding supporting community organizations, expanded emergency programs and others.

We are not just meeting at tables and having discussions; we are acting, and we are putting resources in place.

Anti-racism activities

Mr. Billy Pang: My question is for the Minister of Citizenship and Multiculturalism. Ontario is one of the most diverse provinces in Canada, and that diversity is one of our greatest strengths. However, we have seen a rise in hate-motivated incidents that have targeted places of worship, cultural centres and community organizations. These acts of hate not only threaten the safety and well-being of communities in our province, but they go against everything we stand for as Ontarians.

People in my riding of Markham–Unionville and across the province want to know that our government is taking action to protect our communities and prevent these acts from happening.

Speaker, can the minister please tell this House what our government is doing to combat hate and ensure that Ontarians feel safe in their communities?

The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly): I recognize the member for Scarborough–Agincourt.

Mr. Aris Babikian: Thank you to the member from Markham–Unionville for that question. Racism, hate and discrimination have no place in Ontario and will never be tolerated. That's why our government continues to work with community partners and organizations from faith-based and cultural communities to create community-centred solutions that combat hate and build safer communities right here at home.

Earlier this month, our government launched another round of the Anti-Hate Security and Prevention Grant. Since May 2023, we have invested \$58 million to help faith-based and cultural organizations strengthen safety and security at places of worship and other culturally significant spaces.

Speaker, hate has no place in Ontario and we are taking decisive action to ensure that every person in Ontario can practise their faith, earn a living and raise a family—

The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly): Back to the member from Markham–Unionville.

Mr. Billy Pang: Thank you to the parliamentary assistant for that response.

Security upgrades are critical to addressing hate incidents in our province. That's why the Anti-Hate Security and Prevention Grant program is so important in establishing safe and inclusive environments for all Ontarians. But we know that these investments alone are only part of the solution.

Education and prevention are equally important to address the root causes of hate and build understanding among communities. Our government is working beyond physical security measures to promote inclusion and prevent hate from in our communities.

Speaker, can the parliamentary assistant please explain what additional steps we are taking to foster education and awareness, so that Ontario remains a province where everyone feels safe and respected?

Mr. Aris Babikian: Thank you to the member for highlighting this important point. The member is absolutely right. Combatting hate requires more than security upgrades. That's why in addition to the Anti-Hate Security and Prevention Grant, our government is investing in education and outreach initiatives that promote acceptance, unity and inclusion.

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(Indigenous Community Safety, Anti-Racism Activities)

Between 2021 and 2025, the Ministry of Citizenship and Multiculturalism has supported 82 community-led public education and awareness projects to combat racism and hate while fostering safer, more united communities. That's why we released Building a Stronger and More Inclusive Ontario: Ontario's Anti-Racism Strategic Plan which outlines 49 initiatives from 14 ministries and hundreds of millions in investment from across the government to dismantle barriers and empower communities.

Speaker, our message is clear—