

Attention News Editors:

Ontario Helps Target Hate Crimes

McGuinty Government Attacks Culture Of Silence

TORONTO, March 17 /CNW/ -

NEWS

Ontario and Crime Stoppers are launching a new video today to encourage people to recognize and report hate crimes.

The Hate Destroys Lives DVD was produced for the Ontario Association of Crime Stoppers (<http://www.ontariocrimestoppers.com/>) with funding provided by the Ontario government. It features police and community hate crime experts discussing hate crime and the harm it does to victims. It urges people to report hate crimes to local police or, anonymously, to Crime Stoppers.

Ontario has seen an increase in hate crimes in recent years. In its report, "Addressing Hate Crimes in Ontario," (<http://www.attorneygeneral.jus.gov.on.ca/english/about/pubs/hatecrimes/>) the Hate Crimes Community Working Group proposed a public education campaign to encourage people to report hate crimes to police for action.

The government-sponsored DVD will be distributed to all police services and Crime Stoppers chapters across Ontario. It will also be shown at schools, youth and community organizations across the province.

The Ontario government provides \$200,000 annually to support Crime Stoppers (http://ogov.newswire.ca/ontario/GPOE/2007/05/15/c9293.html?lmatch=&lang=_e.html .)

QUOTES

"We are attacking the roots of hate crime and the culture of silence that allows these heinous acts to escalate," said Community Safety and Correctional Services Minister Rick Bartolucci. "By raising awareness, we hope more people will report and help reduce hate crime incidents."

"Anonymous tips are very effective in helping police solve crimes and provide greater protection for our community," said Pat Gillie, president, Ontario Association of Crime Stoppers.

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QUICK FACTS

- Physical assaults account for 25 per cent of hate crimes in Canada.
- Since 1997, Ontario has invested \$1.7 million so that the public can call Crime Stoppers 24 hours a day, seven days a week.
- In 2006, the Ontario Association of Crime Stoppers received over 19,000 tips.
- Crime Stoppers can be reached at 1-800-222-TIPS.

LEARN MORE

View Minister Bartolucci's comments

(http://www.mcscs.jus.gov.on.ca/english/hate_crimes.html) on hate crimes.

Download Hate Destroys Lives

(<http://events.mediaco.ca/minjus/hatecrimemsg.avi>) DVD.

ontario.ca/safety-news

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BACKGROUND

MCGUINITY GOVERNMENT HELPS COMBAT HATE CRIMES

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The McGuinty government is committed to promoting equality and diversity, and is working with federal, provincial and local partners to address hate crimes. Many of the government's initiatives respond to recommendations of the Ontario Hate Crimes Community Working Group, established in 2005 to advise the government on ways to better address hate crimes.

In addition to the Crime Stoppers DVD, Hate Destroys Lives, a number of ministries have taken steps to address the recommendations made by the Hate Crimes Community Working Group. They include:

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- Training for victim service providers - On November 21, 2007, the government sponsored a pilot training session designed to help victim services workers better respond to diversity issues and situations involving hate crimes. The results of the pilot will assist in planning for training to all victim service providers.
- New community projects - In September 2007, the government invited applications for the Safer and Vital Communities grant. A total of \$855,000 is available to community-based organizations for projects focusing on eliminating/preventing hate crimes and racism. The successful grantees will be announced in spring 2008.
- Support for victims - Through the Community Grants Program, the McGuinty government provided \$1.3 million to enable 21 community organizations that support victims of hate crimes to complete special projects between 2005 and 2008.
- New Anti-Hate Crime Grants - An anti-hate crime initiative that is providing \$1.35 million to 23 community organizations for anti-hate crime projects focusing on eliminating and preventing hate crimes and racism. These projects are currently underway and will be completed by the end of 2008. Three of the projects will have a province-wide impact including: a hate crime forum to strengthen networks and share information among victims' groups, educators, and members of the criminal justice system; a website for victims, to contain province-wide information about hate crimes victim services and resources; and appropriate templates for victim impact statements to be used by community-based victim services.
- Collaboration with other jurisdictions - At the June 2007 Federal/Provincial/Territorial meeting of Deputy Ministers Responsible for Justice, the Ontario government presented the Hate Crimes Community Working Group's recommendations concerning the hate provisions of the Criminal Code. Senior justice officials were

instructed to review the proposals for possible amendments.

- Crime Prevention Week - The theme for Crime Prevention Week 2007 focused on racism and hate destroying lives. A poster with the slogan Committed to Building an Ontario Free from Racism, Intolerance and Hate was distributed to community and policing partners.
- Private security regulations - The government has developed enhanced regulations under the Private Security and Investigative Services Act, which came into force August 23, 2007. The new Clean Criminal Record Regulation stipulates that any person convicted of a prescribed offence including a hate crime (and who has not received a pardon for that conviction) is not eligible for a licence under the Private Security and Investigative Services Act.
- Strengthened the Education Act - The government has amended the safe schools provisions of the Education Act to more effectively combine discipline with opportunities for expelled and suspended students to continue their education. In addition, bullying has been added to the list of infractions for which suspension must be considered. Training has been provided to school board teams on changes to the Education Act. Further training initiatives, including anti-racism, anti-discrimination and cultural awareness will also be undertaken.
- Revised the Provincial Code of Conduct - The government has revised the Provincial Code of Conduct to make it clear that hate propaganda and other forms of behaviour motivated by hate or bias are unacceptable in Ontario schools.
- Developing and enhancing curricula - Changes are being made in existing curricula for all levels of the elementary and secondary education system in Ontario in order to ensure it is inclusive and addresses anti-discrimination education by giving students and staff opportunities to learn about diverse cultures and perspectives. Knowledge and skills relating to conflict resolution, to bullying prevention, and to discrimination and harassment are also being integrated into the revised curriculum as appropriate.
- Enhanced police training - A total of \$50,000 was invested to develop a training and education brochure Responding to Hate Crimes: An Ontario Police Officer's Guide to Investigation and Prevention. This brochure was distributed to all police officers across the province and will supplement current hate crimes training, to create a greater awareness of hate crimes and help police recognize subtle but hateful propaganda and activities. The government requires that all police services in the province have policies and procedures in place to manage investigations into alleged hate crimes.
- On-line Learning - The Ontario Police College developed and made available on the Internet the first e-learning course on Diversity and Race Relations for police, corrections and other law enforcement personnel. This is the first in a series of Internet-based training modules on the subject - January 2008.
- April 21 and 22, 2008, the Ontario Police College will be hosting its annual Issues and Themes Conference. The theme this year is Combating Hate Crime.

- Working with universities - Ontario is encouraging provincially assisted universities, presidents of colleges of applied arts and technology, and the presidents and CEOs of Colleges Ontario and the Council of Ontario Universities to review the report's recommendations and monitor relevant policies and protocols.
- Training for correctional investigators - A hate crime seminar was delivered to the Ministry of Community Safety and Correctional Services' Correctional Investigation and Security Unit, focusing on the causes of hate crimes and investigative procedures at its annual retreat in June 2007.
- Specialized Crown training - A team of Crown prosecutors has been trained to provide legal advice to police and other Crown prosecutors across the province on matters related to hate crimes.
- Updated Crown prosecution policy - The Crown prosecution policy on hate crimes was also updated to ensure that it reflects legal developments and addresses the current social environment relating to hate activities.
- Battling systemic racism - The Ministry of Community Safety and Correctional Services has implemented a multi-year strategy to address systemic racism and hate crimes in Ontario's correctional institutions, which includes the creation of an Organizational Effectiveness Division within the ministry.
- Information-sharing across the justice sector - The government shared the report of the Hate Crimes Community Working Group with Ontario's Chief Justices, the National Judicial Institute and the Ontario Association of Chiefs of Police.

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ONTARIO MINISTRY OF COMMUNITY SAFETY AND CORRECTIONAL SERVICES - More on this organization



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