



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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COUNT SENIORS IN: A SAFER ONTARIO FOR OLDER ADULTS
Ontario Election: EAPO Calls for Action to Protect Seniors from Crime and Abuse

Elder Abuse Prevention Ontario (EAPO) is urging all political parties in Ontario to make the safety and well-being of older adults a core part of their election commitments. With elder abuse and financial fraud on the rise, and a lack of coordinated action to address these growing threats, EAPO calls for stronger protections, better enforcement, and meaningful engagement with seniors to create an Ontario that is free from abuse for all seniors.

Since this election is centered on addressing economic threats to our province, EAPO calls on all political parties to take a stand against criminals who prey on Ontario seniors— robbing them of their financial security, undermining their health and independence, and increasing their reliance on public services, in particular emergency departments, hospitals, shelters, long-term care, policing and social assistance.

Economic Instability Fuels Financial Abuse

Increased economic stress and uncertainty have led to a surge in financial abuse targeting seniors. As of December 31, 2024, the Canadian Anti-Fraud Centre (CAFC) reported approximately \$638 million in financial losses to fraud and organized crime – a significant increase from \$383 million in 2021. These figures likely represent only a fraction of the problem, as it's estimated that fewer than 5% of victims report fraud to the CAFC.

1 in 10 Seniors Experience Abuse – Ontario Must Act Now

Abuse against older adults is a hidden crisis. National studies show that 1 in 10 seniors experience some form of abuse each year, with financial fraud and psychological abuse being the most common. Seniors deserve to live in safe communities, free from exploitation, neglect, and crime. EAPO is calling for meaningful, targeted actions to address crime and abuse against Ontario's older adults that includes stronger enforcement, targeted training for law enforcement, and greater oversight of institutions responsible for safeguarding older Ontarians.

EAPO's Call to Action: Reducing Crime Against Seniors

1. Stronger Legal Protections & Accountability

- Implement new *Consumer Protection Act* provisions with an immediate focus on enforcement to safeguard seniors from fraud and financial scams.
- Increase resources to public safety agencies to support the prosecution of repeat offenders targeting older adults, particularly in cases of fraud and financial abuse.

2. Empowering Law Enforcement and the Justice System

- Mandate regular elder abuse training for police officers, investigators, and provincial offences officers.



- Reintroduce mandatory elder abuse prevention training for administrators and caregivers in all residential continuing care facilities.
- Increase the number of inspectors for long-term care and other residential continuing care facilities.

3. Breaking Down Barriers to Accessing Help

- Mandate coordination of efforts by Ontario ministries and agencies to cut the red tape and remove barriers for seniors to report abuse and access support services.
- Fund 'Community Seniors' Navigators' to support local Elder Abuse Prevention Networks (volunteer-based networks) in outreach, education, and navigation of community safety, health and legal services.

4. Leveraging Existing Expertise

- Collaborate with organizations like EAPO to tap into existing expertise and develop effective prevention and intervention strategies. EAPO is the gold standard in Ontario and Canada when it comes to addressing immediate and emerging threats to Ontario seniors and has developed, for example, resources to support seniors with AI-enabled Fraud, Crypto Scams, and Gender-based Violence that disproportionately affects older women.

5. A Human Rights-Based Approach

- Incorporate the human rights of older adults into service delivery policies and legal frameworks.

Ontario's Election can be a Defining Moment for Seniors' Safety

Ontario's next government must recognize that abuse and neglect of seniors is a growing crisis that demands urgent and coordinated action against these insidious crimes. EAPO will be engaging candidates and political leaders to ensure elder abuse prevention is a top priority in this election.

It's time to count seniors in. Their safety, dignity, and rights must be protected.

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