

Dufferin-Caledon MP Kyle Seeback seeks public input on extortion and community safety

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Following a believed to be targeted shooting in Orangeville this January, Dufferin-Caledon MP Kyle Seeback is seeking the community's thoughts regarding their own safety in their community.

For Seeback, receiving a call from someone he knows recounting a shooting towards their own home was the final straw leading to the survey.

'A person I know really well called me and said, 'Kyle, someone shot 17 bullets into my house last night,' says Seeback. 'It always hits home when you hear about it, but when you hear it from someone who is a close personal friend, that really made it come home for me.'

On Jan. 20, Seeback announced his new community survey regarding extortion in Dufferin-Caledon.

The survey asks residents how safe they feel in their community and whether they are concerned about rising extortion and organized crime locally.

According to the OPP, Caledon and Dufferin County detachments have investigated more than 45 extortion incidents since 2023.

'It's a shocking number,' says Seeback. 'It's just absolutely shocking that this is happening in our community.'

Sharing results from his survey, he says that 30 per cent of responses said they no longer feel safe in their community, 'that to me is absolutely shocking, and it's such a decline in the sense of community safety since I started representing the riding back in 2019 and something that really needs to be fixed.'

Also on the survey are questions regarding jail time.

Seeback says 97 per cent of respondents to the survey indicated that those who commit extortion with firearms or organized crime should face mandatory jail time.

'A huge part of the job of the government is to make sure that people feel safe,' says Seeback. 'That's one of the number one things. So, for this to be happening should be a massive wake-up call for the government.'

He adds that we have to 'fix' the principle of restraint, Section 493.1 in the Criminal Code, which states that 'in making a decision under this Part, a peace officer, justice or judge shall give primary consideration to the release of the accused at the earliest reasonable opportunity and on the least onerous conditions that are appropriate in the circumstances.'

Seeback references back to changes to the Criminal Code under Stephen Harper, including Harper's 'tough on crime' agenda.

These changes provided tougher sentences for violent and repeat offenders, harsher mandatory minimum sentences, and increased restrictions on applying for pardons.

'Violent crime went down 33 per cent. Violent crime in the last decade is up,' says Seeback. 'We've gone in the exact opposite direction directly because of the changes that the Liberals made to the criminal justice system.'

It's gone in the exact opposite direction than it should be, and there really are simple fixes. People who engage in violent criminality should not be eligible for bail.

Regarding his survey, Seeback says to trust in the wisdom of the average person, saying that the community is 100 per cent right about this.

We've introduced legislation in Parliament conservative members to try and fix that several times, and unfortunately the liberals and the NDP have banded together to defeat those. But we're just going to keep trying, says Seeback. We're going to keep trying to do whatever it takes to make our community safer. [If] we have to introduce 100 bills to try and do it, we'd be prepared to do that.