

Good afternoon.

As I stated, I am the elected chair of the corrections division of OPSEU

I represent over 6,000 corrections professionals, which includes corrections officers, probation and parole officers, bailiffs and several other corrections classification.

I am greatly appreciative for the introduction of this legislation and the assistance it will provide to my members who are experiencing PTSD.

As a correctional officer with 25 years of working in Ontario's provincial jails, these amendments to the *Workplace Safety Insurance Act, 1997* are long overdue for the first responders and other workers who protect Ontario every day.

I have been a participant, a witness and a third-party respondent to hundreds of incidents of assault, medical emergencies, fires, mental health interventions and death in situations that do not fit into any defined category as a correctional first responder.

Many of these incidents over the duration of my career stand out for a variety of reasons, and many more I have forgotten.

I raise this brief overview, as I am included under this legislation.

Today, I present to you as a representative of Ontario's probation and parole officers and bailiffs, who are not included, and I am conflicted on how to equally message these individuals' needs to have access to the legislative changes proposed by Bill 163.

I have heard and read many of these professionals' working stories and was told that they are taking a toll on their mental and physical well-being.

These corrections professionals are the frontline workers who deal with the same individuals who come into contact with all justice partners.

Probation and parole officers' experiences include physical assaults upon themselves, first-hand accounts from offenders of child sex crimes, murders, domestic abuse, secondary accounts of criminal acts in court documents, weapons brought into their offices, and client suicides, to name some of the daily issues they encounter.

Ontario bailiffs have similar experiences to myself as a correctional officer.

All Ontario bailiffs first start out as, or are trained as, correctional officers.

To become a bailiff, you need additional specialized training above that of a correctional officer.

Many bailiffs are involved or serve under specialized response teams that respond to crises within the institutions.

Correctional officers backfill for the bailiff classification due to vacation and sickness and training.

Several of my colleagues from probation and parole and bailiffs will be presenting to this committee in a much more in depth to give an account of their working lives.

Their information will give you a much better understanding of their profession and rationale for inclusion in this legislation.

My request to this committee is to add these correctional professionals – probation and parole officers and bailiffs – to the language of Bill 163.

This will give these individuals the same opportunity to have a diagnosis of PTSD under the DSM 5 and the ability to address their diagnosis within a timely intervention and a healthier return to the workplace serving Ontarians.

Thank you for your time and consideration.