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MEDIA STATEMENT

COMMUNITY SAFETY BILL PASSES COMMITTEE STAGE

The Western Cape Community Safety Bill, a unique piece of proposed legislation aimed at creating a clear working relationship between the South African Police Service, provincial oversight responsibilities and civil society, was today approved by the Western Cape Provincial Parliament's standing committee on Community Safety.

Following a month of public hearings around the province and extensive input by numerous experts and organisations, the bill was approved with only minor amendments.

The bill makes provision for an ombudsman who will hear complaints about police service delivery and who will report to the Provincial Parliament.

Clear roles and functions for CPFs (community police forums) and Neighbourhood Watches, and the training and resourcing for the same are envisaged. A workable reporting mechanism to assist with collation and analysis of critical information relating to police resources and actions would inform the annual policing plan will be a critical component. Data analysis will play a key role in this regard.

"The fact is that to date there is no legislation to give this vital aspect in the fight against crime any direction", said committee chairperson, Mark Wiley.

"At a time when public opinion regarding policing is at an all time low, it is vital that every effort is made to re-establish policing standards and confidence in our law enforcers. This can only be achieved by the public being part of the solution and by holding both political heads and senior police officials to account", he said.

The bill will now be forwarded to the House for debate and final approval.

"This critical piece of legislation is aimed at supporting good policing and relations and exposing those bad practices that give the police a bad name", Wiley said. "The public expects nothing less."

Mark Wiley, MPP

Chairperson of Standing Committee on Community Safety

Western Cape Provincial Parliament

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