

## **Security firm aims at young School clothes bulletproofed**

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Bulletproof back-to-school clothing for children is on sale in New York City, where guns and knives are commonplace in schools and city neighborhoods.

Custom-made vests, jackets and T-shirts lined with bulletproof material and costing \$300 to \$600 are giving parents a feeling of security, said Stephen D'Andrilli, a former New York police officer who has been selling Kevlar-lined clothing for diplomats, politicians and other high-profile individuals for five years.

Mr. D'Andrilli said he has not yet had any orders from Canada for the children's items, and the initial reaction of Canadian police and educators was that children here don't need bulletproof jackets, book bags and clipboards.

The chairman of the Toronto Board of Education, Tony Silipo, said there are better ways than dressing children in bulletproof clothing to deal with the increasing violence in society.

"I think it engenders the sort of mentality that we've lost control," said Mr. Silipo, a New Democrat who was elected on Thursday to the Ontario Legislature in the Toronto riding of Dovercourt.

"Just the thought that people think they have to go to those measures to protect their kids scares me," Mr. Silipo said.

However, he said, "I wouldn't be surprised if there were a few (parents who felt the need to purchase the clothing)."

"I don't think it's gotten to that point yet," Constable John Shulga of the Metropolitan Toronto Police said. "We've never had crossfire, not that I've heard of anyway."

"What a waste of time and money," Detective Grant MacDonald of the Vancouver Police Department said. "Out here, just forget it. (Wearing bulletproof clothing) would be the height of silliness."

Mr. D'Andrilli said the clothing is a response to a need in New York, where random gunfire has killed several children this summer.

In one eight-day period last month, four children were shot and killed in New York City. On Saturday night, an 11-year-old girl was shot in the back through her bedroom wall after a street altercation, New York police said.

Mr. D'Andrilli's company started making the Kevlar-lined children's clothing and other items such as a bulletproof baby blanket after being approached by a group of concerned parents.

Who is buying the bulletproof items? "Concerned, responsible parents who realize that the police cannot provide adequate protection for themselves and their children," Mr. D'Andrilli said.