



Office of the  
Saskatchewan Information  
and Privacy Commissioner

## NEWS RELEASE – September 17, 2018

### Canada's Access to Information and Privacy Guardians Call for Privacy Regulation and Oversight of Political Parties

**Regina, SK, September 17, 2018** – In a joint resolution, Canada's Information and Privacy Ombudspersons and Commissioners have called on governments to pass legislation requiring political parties to comply with globally recognized privacy principles, to provide Canadians with access to the personal information they hold about them, and to provide for independent oversight to verify and enforce privacy compliance.

Recent events have illuminated how political parties collect and use personal information to target individuals in specific and unique ways for political gain. Digital tools amass extensive amounts of personal information from diverse sources, frequently without the knowledge or consent of the individual. These increasingly sophisticated big data practices raise new privacy and ethical concerns and the need for greater transparency is evident.

Further, Privacy Commissioner of Canada Daniel Therrien noted: "Recent investigations in various countries have revealed that political parties are gathering significant amounts of personal information on voters as they adopt new targeting techniques. Information about our political views is highly sensitive and it's clearly unacceptable that federal and provincial political parties are not subject to privacy laws. The federal government's response to public concern about how personal information is being used in the political process – Bill C-76 – adds nothing of substance in terms of privacy protection. It's time to act to better protect the rights of Canadians."

"Political parties access and use sensitive personal information of nearly all Canadians, but only in British Columbia are they subject to privacy legislation. These standards should be applied across the country so all Canadians have the same privacy protections," says Michael McEvoy, Information and Privacy Commissioner for British Columbia.

The joint resolution, *Securing Trust and Privacy in Canada's Electoral Process*, was agreed to at the annual meeting of federal, provincial, territorial Information and Privacy Ombudspersons and Commissioners. The full text is available on their respective websites.

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