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## **Parties not disclosing what they will do to fix Canada's broken Access to Information system**

### **Transparency groups seek answers from leaders**

Ottawa/Toronto/Vancouver – The federal Access to Information system is in chaos, but the parties seeking office have said nothing about what they will do to fix it.

In a short but pointed letter to the party leaders, the Canadian Taxpayers Federation, the BC Freedom of Information and Privacy Association and Newspapers Canada are asking them to spell out what they will do to combat an already a disastrous situation.

“In the campaign so far, politicians have used words like open government, transparency and democracy,” said Troy Lanigan of the Canadian Taxpayers Federation, “but they say almost nothing about Access to Information. Without a functioning ATI system, those words ring very hollow.”

“The Information Commissioner has said the system has hit rock bottom, and that should have alarm bells going off,” said FIPA’s Vincent Gogolek. “In an election where democracy is supposedly a major issue, the leaders have said virtually nothing about this undermining of Canadians’ right to information.”

In the past decade alone a number of studies by parliamentary committees, by a series of Information Commissioners and various task forces and independent groups, have pointed to the serious problems with the ATI system. Former Information Commissioner Robert Marleau said the situation amounts to “a major information management crisis throughout government.”

The joint letter asks the leaders just one question: **“Do you find this acceptable, and if not, what will your party do about it?”**

“The current state of the Access to Information system is unacceptable,” said John Hinds of Newspapers Canada. “This is not a matter of debate, it is a fact and those who would be our leaders have to address this.”

The letter asks the party leaders for a response by April 18. The three groups will post the responses on their respective websites to allow Canadians to see where the parties stand on ATI reform.

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