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Privacy Campaign presents 50,000-name petition opposing contracting out of Medicare and Pharmacare administration

VICTORIA -- Representatives from the Right to Privacy Campaign turned over petitions totalling 51,203 names to Opposition caucus members today, for presentation to the provincial legislature. The petitions oppose the contracting out of Medicare and Pharmacare administration jobs to private companies.

"These names represent tens of thousands of British Columbians who do not want their personal, confidential information placed in the hands of private companies," said Paul Lewand, Chair of the BC Persons With AIDS Society. "They believe that the information they give to government should be protected by government, and not corporate America."

"When the handling of information is outsourced, it is still under greater risk of unauthorized disclosure than if it remains in the custody of the provincial government," said Darrell Evans, Executive Director of the BC Freedom of Information and Privacy Association. "If it's a choice between protecting our privacy and incurring greater risk by outsourcing, we say don't outsource."

The petition includes both paper and online signatures. The online petition site can be viewed at: <http://petitiononline.com/publicpc/petition-sign.html>.

The Right to Privacy Campaign was formed in response to the provincial government's decision to outsource the administration of core government services, and opposes the "contracting out of information or information management to any company subject to foreign laws that violate the privacy rights of Canadians, like the USA Patriot Act."

Members of the coalition include:

BC Civil Liberties Assoc.; BC Coalition of People with Disabilities; BC Federation of Labour; BC Forum; BC Government and Service Employees' Union; BC Health Coalition; BC Library Association; BC Persons With AIDS Society; BC Seniors' Network; BC Regional Office of the Council of Canadians; Carpenters Local 1995 Union; Commonwealth Centre for Electronic Governance; Council of Senior Citizens' Organization of BC; Electronic Frontier Canada; Freedom of Information and Privacy Association; Reach Community Health Centre; Victoria AIDS Respite Care Society; and Women Elders in Action.

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