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Transparency groups urge PM Harper to get rid of *Access to Information Act* loopholes

Public Works Denies Info Commissioner's Request for RCMP Investigation

Ottawa/Toronto/Vancouver – The BC Freedom of Information and Privacy Association, the Canadian Taxpayers Federation (CTF), and Newspapers Canada are urging Prime Minister Stephen Harper to bring the PMO and Ministers' offices under the *Access to Information Act*, after Information Commissioner Suzanne Legault identified three ministerial staff as having interfered with a number of ATI requests.

"The people most likely to interfere with an ATI request are people working in offices that are outside the *Act*," said FIPA Executive Director Vincent Gogolek. "This is not the first time the Commissioner has made a report urging an RCMP investigation of one of these incidents."

Commissioner Legault found that three federal ministerial staff had "...inserted themselves in various ways into a process that was designed to be carried out in an objective manner by public servants. Consequently, the rights conferred under the *Act* were compromised." However, the Department of Public Works has refused to refer the case to the RCMP, citing past cases that have resulted in no charges being laid.

http://www.oic-ci.gc.ca/eng/ingerence-dans-acces-a-l%E2%80%99information-partie-2-interference-with-access-to-information-part-2_1.aspx

"There is clearly a problem if people who interfere with ATI requests aren't even being investigated," said CTF Federal Director Gregory Thomas. "This situation is unacceptable both in terms of transparency rule of law."

"This case shows the need for changes to the law," added Newspaper Canada head John Hinds. "Those changes should be made as part of root and branch reform of the *Access to Information Act*, which is badly outdated."

The letter signed by all three organizations to Prime Minister Harper can be found [here](#).

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