

NEWS RELEASE

British Columbia Civil Liberties Association
For Immediate Release: November 9, 2006

Civil Liberties Association Denounces Government Plan To Add Police to Judicial Advisory Committees

The BC Civil Liberties Association is panning federal Minister of Justice Minister and Attorney General Vic Toews' latest law and order plan to add police representatives to judicial advisory committees. These committees make recommendations to the Minister for new judicial appointments.

BCCLA President Jason Gratl: "This proposal is so absurd, we initially thought it was a hoax. The police have no special expertise in hiring judges, just as the judiciary has no expertise in hiring chiefs of police or RCMP commissioners. The process should be free from ideological considerations."

The BCCLA's position on judicial appointments emphasizes the importance of maintaining judicial independence and impartiality in the appointment process.

The police have long been critics of the courts when they perceive that certain judges and judgments are "soft" on crime. The presence of police representatives on judicial committees would raise the reasonable apprehension that police representatives would be looking to appoint judges who would better reflect a get-tough-on crime approach or judges who might tend to overlook police misconduct.

Thus, the addition of policing interests to judicial appointment committees would unduly politicize the process thereby threatening judicial independence.

The BCCLA's position on judicial appointments to the Supreme Court of Canada is available at: <http://www.bccla.org/positions/dueprocess/04judicial%20appointments.htm>

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