

May 25, 2010



The Honourable Steven Harper, M.P.  
Prime Minister of Canada  
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Ottawa, Ontario  
K1A 0A2

VIA FAX: (613)941-6900

The Honourable Jack Layton, M.P.  
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VIA FAX: (613)230-9950

The Honourable Michael Ignatieff, M.P.  
Leader of the Official Opposition  
House of Commons  
Ottawa, ON,  
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VIA FAX: 613-995-9364

The Honourable Gilles Duceppe, M.P.  
House of Commons  
Ottawa, Ontario  
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VIA FAX: (613)954-2121

Dear Sirs:

**RE: Request of the Federal Auditor General to audit MP expense accounts**

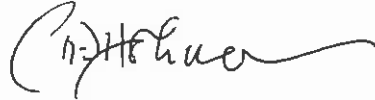
I write to you as President of the BC Civil Liberties Association, one of Canada's oldest and foremost civil liberties groups. We understand that the federal Auditor General has requested access to Members of Parliament's expense accounts for the purposes of auditing them. We understand further that the all-party House of Commons Board of Internal Economy has denied this request, and that as of last week the Bloc Quebecois was the only party in favour of granting the access requested.

Canadians have a right to full and complete transparency, with very limited exceptions, from our members of parliament in order to exercise their democratic right to vote and hold their elected representatives accountable. Denying access to the federal Auditor General creates the spectre, whether grounded or not, that our federally elected representatives have something to hide. Whether or not that is the case, there is no legal or democratic justification that permits the hiding of even potentially embarrassing information.

We note in particular that in other jurisdictions, including in Nova Scotia and the United Kingdom, similar audits have led to criminal charges and criminal investigations of Members of the provincial and federal parliaments respectively. These results are not arguments against granting the Auditor General access, but rather are results that provide greater weight to her request for access as the potential for misfeasance seems to be well grounded.

We urge your parties to grant immediate access to Ms. Fraser to these expense accounts to restore Canadians' faith in our democratic processes and our elected representatives, and their accountability to the electorate.

Yours truly,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "R. Holmes", with a long, sweeping horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Robert Holmes  
*President*