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Ms. Michael Vonn
Policy Director
BC Civil Liberties Association
900 Helmcken Street – 2nd Floor
Vancouver BC V6Z 1B3

Dear Ms. Vonn:

Thank you for your April 17, 2014 letter regarding the recent report issued by the Office of the Information and Privacy Commissioner (OIPC) about police record checks.

Ministry staff have been actively working with police agencies to standardize and streamline the provision of police record checks in BC. Significant progress has been made in ensuring fully informed consent, standardizing forms, language and completed product, and clarifying the type of information that can and cannot be released. This work was done with a focus on public safety, ensuring employers were fully informed of an individual's background in order to consider risk before making a final hiring decision. It is important to keep in mind that many serious incidents investigated by police do not result in criminal convictions but may still be relevant and have significant public safety value.

As part of the process, the OIPC was consulted to get feedback on the provision of police record checks. Ministry staff have worked closely with the OIPC and I have met directly with the Commissioner to discuss this matter. As this is a complex and sensitive issue, the Ministry welcomed the Commissioner's investigation into this subject. Commissioner Denham's report cites concerns with the routine disclosure of non-conviction and mental health information for employment checks.

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Ministry of
Justice

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My Ministry is committed to carefully reviewing the five recommendations in Commissioner Denham's report and is currently consulting with BC police agencies to ensure that the proper balance is struck between public safety, privacy, human rights and civil liberties. I agree with your point that individuals with mental health issues should not be discriminated against, stigmatized or discouraged from coming forward for help. I believe we can achieve this goal while still protecting public safety. I can assure you that finding the balance in the disclosure of this information is a priority for me.

Yours very truly,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Anton." with a period at the end. The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Suzanne Anton QC
Attorney General
Minister of Justice