



OFFICE OF THE
INFORMATION &
PRIVACY COMMISSIONER
for British Columbia

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News Release

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Statement from B.C. Information and Privacy Commissioner regarding proposed amendments to Bill 20 (Election Amendment Act)

VICTORIA—B.C. Information and Privacy Commissioner Elizabeth Denham made the following statement regarding proposed amendments by Minister of Justice Suzanne Anton to Bill 20 (Election Amendment Act), which appeared on the Order Paper of the B.C. Legislature today:

“Citizens have raised serious privacy concerns about Bill 20, the Election Amendment Act-- concerns I share as B.C.’s Privacy Commissioner.

“If passed, Bill 20 would require Elections BC to disclose information about whether or not a person has voted in an election or by-election to political parties and individuals who were candidates in a provincial election.

“On April 13, 2015 I wrote to the Attorney General and Minister of Justice recommending that government withdraw certain sections of the Bill. However, if the Bill proceeded, I recommended that it be amended in order to put clear limits on the use and disclosure of this sensitive personal information.

“Today, Minister Anton advanced several amendments to Bill 20. These amendments, if passed, would prohibit the use of voter participation information for commercial purposes and limit its use to the purposes of the *Election Act*. Further, it would require all political parties and candidates receiving the personal information of voters to have a privacy policy in place that protects against unauthorized use and disclosure and is acceptable to the Chief Electoral Officer.

“I acknowledge the efforts of the Minister of Justice to make amendments to Bill 20 to address the privacy concerns of citizens and those of my Office. I also wish to acknowledge Members of the Legislative Assembly for their contributions to the debate and their commitment to the protection of privacy rights with respect to voter information.

“As I stated in my April 13 letter I will pursue discussions with the Chief Electoral Officer to offer my perspective as to how new regulations can protect the personal information of B.C. voters should this Bill pass.”

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