



Speaking Points for

The Honourable Kash Heed Solicitor General

Date: Thursday, September 17, 2009

Event: Re-Introduction of the Police Amendment Act
Parliament Building, Hemlock Room

CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY

- Our police are among the most dedicated public servants as front-line guardians of public safety.
 - But police have to operate with full public confidence and that's why there is a need for a transparent, accountable and consistent process when it comes to complaints against municipal police.
 - Many of you saw this bill when it was first introduced last spring, but I want to point out a few highlights and then I'll take your questions.
 - This legislation greatly enhances the role and powers of B.C.'s independent police complaint commissioner.
 - The police complaint commissioner has the authority to contemporaneously monitor, or provide 'real-time' oversight of a complaint.
 - The commissioner can direct further investigation of a complaint if needed and can even order investigations without a complaint having been made.
 - The commissioner can order an external police force to investigate any complaint if it is in the public interest.
 - Also important in this legislation is the fact that **ALL** in-custody and police reported deaths, or incidents resulting in serious harm, **MUST BE** reported immediately to the commissioner, and must be investigated by an **external** police force.
 - Other important provisions include:
 - Police officers, including those who are witnesses, **must** cooperate with investigations.
 - Police officers who retire or resign will be subject to the complaint process
 - Discipline decisions can also be reviewed.
-
- Legislation applies only to independent municipal police.
 - RCMP police more than 70 per cent of our population.
 - We are working with the federal government to create an oversight mechanism that will benefit ALL police officers, and ALL communities in B.C.
 - I have already communicated to my federal counterpart that we need to work towards having authority for the RCMP disciplinary process delegated to British Columbia or harmonized with our provincial process.
 - This legislation is a starting point for improving police accountability. We will always be open to exploring mechanisms to ensure the public have effective and efficient oversight.