



23 September 2013: For immediate release

## **Nova Scotia: ATI Law Requires Significant Reform**

As Nova Scotians prepare to select their next government, transparency and a positive attitude toward the right to information should be a significant consideration in determining who is best suited to lead the province. Today, the Centre for Law and Democracy (CLD) released an [Analysis](#) pointing to major problems with Nova Scotia's transparency framework, the Freedom of Information and Protection and Privacy Act (FOIPOP). The Analysis notes that the FOIPOP is significantly weaker than transparency legislation found in many developing countries, including India, South Africa and Mexico, and proposes concrete legislative solutions to bring the framework up to code.

*"The reforms we are proposing may seem extensive, but they are the bare minimum required to bring the FOIPOP into line with international standards,"* said CLD Executive Director Toby Mendel. *"Nova Scotia was once in the vanguard on this issue, adopting the first law in Canada, but it has now fallen sadly behind while international standards have moved steadily forwards."*

The major proposed reforms include:

- The Review Officer should have the power to make binding orders, and an expanded mandate including investigative powers.
- Timeline extensions for response should be capped at 30 days.
- Unnecessary and overly broad exceptions should be removed or revised.
- The rules on release of information in the public interest should be strengthened.

The evidence that the access to information law is weak is strong. From expense scandals to obfuscation around the provincial government's business dealings, there is a clear need to enhance openness in government. CLD has long been an advocate for root-and-branch reform of access to information legislation across Canada. In the context of the upcoming provincial election, CLD urges the competing parties to include commitments in their platforms to improve Nova Scotia's right to information law.

The Analysis is available at: <http://www.law-democracy.org/live/nova-scotia-ati-law-requires-significant-reform>.

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