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Liberals and PC's Endorse Transparency Recommendations

On 23 September 2013, the Centre for Law and Democracy (CLD) released a detailed [Analysis](#) of the weaknesses in Nova Scotia's access to information framework which included a number of recommendations for reform. In response, the leaders of all three major parties [expressed some willingness](#) to consider CLD's recommendations. To measure the true strength of the parties' commitment to transparency, CLD called on them to make the following [three specific commitments](#):

1. If elected Premier, I will expand the powers and mandate of the Review Officer, particularly through granting her order-making power.
2. If elected Premier, I will impose a binding timeline of 30 days, extendable once by a maximum of 30 days, for responding to access to information requests.
3. If elected Premier, in our dealings with government lawyers, my government will only claim solicitor-client privilege in cases where confidentiality is necessary to protect an impending court case or negotiation.

We are pleased to announce that both the Liberal and Progressive Conservative campaigns have unequivocally accepted all three recommendations and pledged to fulfil these promises if they win the election. The New Democratic Party, on the other hand, rejected all three, arguing, against all the evidence, that there was no need for these reforms.

Access to information is a human right, protected both under international law and in the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, and an indispensable tool in promoting accountable, participatory government. As a non-partisan human rights organisation, CLD takes no position on the outcome of the election. But we do call on all parties to promote the right of access, and to respect their commitments on this issue. For our part, we will be happy to work with the next government to improve openness in Nova Scotia.

The full responses of the three parties, as well as a letter responding to the objections raised by the NDP, are available at: <http://www.law-democracy.org/live/liberals-and-pcs-endorse-transparency-recommendations/>.

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