



Sept. 5, 2025

The Right Honourable Mark Carney, PC, MP,
Prime Minister of Canada
Office of the Prime Minister
80 Wellington Street
Ottawa, ON K1A 0A2

Subject: *Stronger Whistleblower Protections - A Call to Reform Laws and Safeguard Truth-Tellers*

Dear Prime Minister Carney:

I am writing to introduce our organization, Whistleblowing Canada Research Society and apprise you of a critical matter. Our purpose is to advance education on the whistleblowing phenomenon through research and share the knowledge publicly. As citizens deeply invested in the health and future of our democracy, what we have learned as professionals, researchers, and through lived experience is deeply concerning. It is therefore with a sense of urgency and hope that I urge you and your government to take decisive action in rewriting and strengthening the laws that protect whistleblowers in our country and at the same time, attend to problematic political and organizational cultures. The time has come to stand unequivocally with those who have the courage to speak truth to power, often at great personal risk, for the benefit of all Canadians.

The Critical Role of Whistleblowers in Society

Throughout history, whistleblowers have played a pivotal role in unveiling corruption, abuse of power, and systemic injustices. Their disclosures have led to greater transparency and accountability in both the public and private sectors, sparking reforms that have improved the lives of countless individuals. From exposing financial fraud to bringing human rights violations to light, whistleblowers are the unsung heroes who often act not for personal gain, but out of a sense of duty to the greater good.

In Canada, we take pride in our commitment to democracy, justice, and the rule of law. And Canada is a signatory to international agreements and covenants at the United Nations in support of these very principles. Yet, these values are only as strong as the commitment and sincerity of our leaders and the mechanisms we create to uphold them. When individuals within organizations witness wrongdoing and choose to come forward, they embody the very essence of civic integrity. They are, undeniably, the last line of defense against abuses that may otherwise remain hidden.



The Inadequacy of Current Legislation and the Role of Culture

Despite the recognized importance of whistleblowers, and the role of reprisals as an obstacle to disclosing wrongdoing, the current legal framework in Canada offers them insufficient legal protection. Attempts to gain adequate legal protection since 1991 have been led mostly by Private Members. See Appendix 1 for a *History of Canadian Parliamentary Actions Related to Legislation to Protect Whistleblowers – 1991 to 2024*. Thirty five years of effort has seen little progress since 1991.

Our research considered the question of why reprisals occur and discovered that legislation alone will not protect whistleblowers. There must be concurrent attention to:

- dysfunctional organizational and political cultures,
- out-dated understandings of whistleblowing in the legal system and
- the surprise finding - if legislation is introduced into an unwelcoming or hostile culture, it will not be adequately upheld. Attention to organizational and political cultures and on-going committed leadership is critical to success.

The existing laws—patchwork and inconsistent—fail to provide comprehensive safeguards against retaliation. Retaliation includes a number of toxic tactics such as bullying, harassment, mobbing, gaslighting, social ostracism, career derailment, legal jeopardy and often unrecognized resultant serious physical and mental harm. Many who consider disclosing misconduct are faced with a harrowing choice: remain silent and complicit or speak out and risk their livelihoods and well-being.

Numerous studies and testimonies have highlighted the gaps in our legislative approach. The Public Servants Disclosure Protection Act (PSDPA) has been criticized for its lack of scope, limited remedies, and procedural hurdles that deter would-be whistleblowers. And it appears to be the model for provincial laws. In fact, an international study has identified the PSDPA as the worst in the world – tied with Lebanon and Norway - with no best practices. Private sector employees, and other citizens meanwhile, are too often left outside of any meaningful protection. The consequences are predictable: people with knowledge of wrongdoing hesitate to act, and society suffers as a result.

The Case for Reform

A robust system of whistleblower protection benefits not only the individuals who come forward but the entire nation. It strengthens public trust in our institutions, deters unethical behaviour, and ensures that government and corporate leaders are held to account. International experience demonstrates that countries with strong legal frameworks for whistleblowing enjoy greater



transparency, lower levels of corruption, and more healthy democracies. Furthermore, corporations are more productive and profitable.

Rewriting the law to adequately support whistleblowers is not merely a legal imperative; it is a moral one. It signals to Canadians that their voices matter, that truth is valued above silence, and that integrity will not be sacrificed on the altar of convenience or expedience.

The Human Toll of Inaction

It is all too easy to reduce whistleblowing to an abstract matter of policy, but behind every case is a person—often someone who has devoted years to their organization, who believes in its mission, and who faces a profound ethical dilemma. The stories of whistleblowers who have suffered for their courage are heart-wrenching: lost jobs, fractured relationships, reputational harm, and chronic stress, trauma and resulting harm to physical and mental health. We must not ask these individuals to bear the full burden of upholding our values in isolation. On the other hand, we must ask, how can reprisals take place with impunity in a country that has made them illegal?

By failing to adequately protect whistleblowers, we send a chilling message to those who might consider exposing corruption or wrongdoing. We tell them that fear and punishment, not justice, will be their likely reward. This is unacceptable in a country that we like to think cherishes democratic principles.

An Opportunity: International Standards and Global Leadership

The previous government acknowledged the need to review the PSDPA with a view to strengthening it by establishing a Task Force in Nov. 2022. The Task Force failed to report publicly before an election was called in 2025. Bill C290, a Private Members Bill to amend the PSDPA introduced in 2022 was limited in what it could offer and the few improvements agreed to were also lost with the call of an election.

Canada now has a new government. This presents an opportunity, under your leadership, for our government to act and to learn from and exceed the standards set by other jurisdictions. The European Union, for example, has adopted comprehensive directives on whistleblower protection, requiring member states to establish mechanisms that ensure safety and fairness for those who speak out. The United States, and Australia, have implemented various models that offer valuable lessons in both pitfalls and successes.

Should we accept mediocrity and our current status as outlier or aspire to excellence? I believe that Canada, with its rich tradition of championing human rights, can set a gold standard—one that others will seek to emulate.



Our vision is for a Canada where all persons feel empowered to raise concerns without fear. A Canada where wrongdoing is confronted with transparency, not concealed in silence. Where public servants, corporate employees, members of non-profits and all persons alike are united by a commitment to truth and accountability. This is the vision that can be realized through bold legislative action and safe, speak-up cultures.

A Call to Action

Prime Minister, I respectfully call upon you and your government to act with vision and resolve. Convene experts, consult stakeholders, and engage in a meaningful effort to improve whistleblower protections. Craft legislation that is clear, comprehensive, and rigorous. Send a message to all Canadians that no one stands alone when defending the public interest.

Now, more than ever, is the moment to realign our whistleblower protection laws and cultures with our values—to build a society in which courage is not punished but celebrated. I urge you to act, not only for those who have suffered in silence but for the generations yet to come.

Thank you for your time and attention to this critical matter. I look forward to seeing Canada take its rightful place among the world's leaders in whistleblower protection. We stand ready to contribute our expertise should you so wish.

Yours sincerely,

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Encl. - Appendix 1 - *History of Canadian Parliamentary Actions Related to Legislation to Protect Whistleblowers – 1991 to 2024..*



APPENDIX 1

History of Canadian Parliamentary Actions Related to Legislation to Protect Whistleblowers – 1991 to 2024.

The following list of Private Members efforts to have whistleblower protection legislation passed is taken from “*BILL S-6: PUBLIC SERVICE WHISTLEBLOWING ACT*” by David Johansen, Research and Education, Library of Parliament, Oct. 8, 2002.

- 1991- Bill C-293, an Act to amend the Canadian Human Rights Act, the Canada Labour Code and the Public Service Employment Act (whistleblowing) (3rd Session, 34th Parliament) was introduced in the House of Commons by Ms. Joy Langan on 24 September 1991. It was later debated at second reading and dropped from the *Order Paper*.
- 1994 - A virtually identical Private Member’s bill, Bill C-248, was introduced in the House by Mr. Pierre de Savoye on 11 May 1994 (1st Session, 35th Parliament). This bill also was subsequently debated at second reading and dropped from the *Order Paper*.
- 1996 - A later and different Private Member’s bill on the subject was introduced in the House by Mr. de Savoye on 19 June 1996; this bill, Bill C-318, Whistle Blowers Protection Act (2nd Session, 35th Parliament) died with the dissolution of Parliament, having received only first reading.
- 1999 - Bill C-499, a similar Private Member’s bill with some additional provisions, was introduced in the House by Mr. Pat Martin on 23 April 1999 (1st Session, 36th Parliament) but did not go beyond first reading.
- 1999 - It was subsequently re-introduced as Bill C-239 in the House by Mr. Martin on 18 October 1999 (2nd Session, 36th Parliament) but died on the *Order Paper* with the dissolution of Parliament. It was later re-introduced as Bill C-206 in the House by Mr. Martin on 2 February 2001 (1st Session, 37th Parliament) and subsequently died on the *Order Paper*.
- 2000, 2001, 2002 - Another Private Member’s bill, Bill C-508, Whistle Blower Human Rights Act, was introduced in the House by Mr. Gurmant Grewal on 17 October 2000 (2nd Session, 36th Parliament). It died on the *Order Paper* with the dissolution of Parliament. It was subsequently re-introduced as Bill C-201 in the House by Mr. Grewal on 1 February 2001 (1st Session, 37th Parliament) and once again died on the *Order Paper*. It was later re-introduced as Bill C-201 in the House by Mr. Grewal on 2 October 2002 (2nd Session, 37th Parliament).
- 2001- Bill C-351, Public Service Whistleblowing Act, was introduced in the House by Mr. Greg Thompson on 29 May 2001 (1st Session, 37th Parliament). The bill, similar to Senator Kinsella’s bills on the subject, died on the *Order Paper*.
- 2002 - It was later re-introduced as Bill C-241 in the House by Mr. Thompson on 23 October 2002 (2nd session, 37th Parliament).



- 2002 - On 3 October 2002, a Private Senator's public bill, Bill S-6, the Public Service Whistleblowing Act, was introduced in the Senate by the Hon. Noel Kinsella.⁽¹⁾ The bill would establish a mechanism for dealing with the reporting of wrongdoing in the federal Public Service.

The following lists mostly government actions regarding whistleblower protection:

- March 2004 - the Liberal government brought forward Bill C 25, the first iteration of the PSDPA, amid the Sponsorship Scandal and the subsequent inquiry by Justice Gomery. It dies on the order paper when an election is called.
- Oct. 2004 - a Liberal minority government introduces Bill C 11, a new iteration of the PSDPA.
- Nov. 5, 2005, Justice Gomery's report on the sponsorship scandal is published. He is concerned the new law with change nothing and recommends changes which were for the most part ignored.
- Nov. 25, 2005, Bill C 11 receives Royal Assent just days before Parliament is dissolved on a nonconfidence motion on Nov. 28, 2005.
- Jan. 23, 2006 – a general election takes place, and a Conservative government is elected.
- December 12, 2006 - the Federal Accountability Act (C-2) is granted Royal Assent. This statute, omnibus in nature, amends several statutes, including the Public Servants Disclosure Protection Act.
- 2007 – PSDPA was implemented.
- 2012 – Government “disobeyed a statute” by not completing an independent review of the PSDPA and a report to both Houses of Parliament after 5 years as per the PSDPA. This is an indictable offence under criminal law and has undoubtedly caused serious harm to people.
- 2017 – The new government tasked the Parliamentary Committee- OGGO- with reviewing the PSDPA. A unanimous, all-party report No. 9, “*Strengthening the Protection of the Public Interest within the Public Servants Disclosure Protection Act*” recommended more than 30 changes but was never permitted to be discussed/debated in Parliament. All attempts by MP's failed.
- 2022 - Bill C290, Private Member' Bill – BQ, introduced in June 2022 and passed unanimously in 2023.
- 2024 - Bill C290 was introduced in the Senate but did not complete the legislative process when an election was called in Jan. 2025.