

IntegrityBC.ca

12 June 2012

Mr. Mike McDonald
Executive Director, BC Liberal Party
PO Box 21014, Waterfront Centre,
Vancouver, BC V6C 3K3

Dear Mike:

Thank you for your letter of June 8th.

As I subsequently learned, you may be correct in calling me on my comments last week on CKNW over the issue of possible prohibited donations to the NDP; although as deputy chief electoral officer Nola Western noted in an interview with CKNW such donations are not easily identified even by Elections BC, which is why they missed the prohibited donations from TRIUMF to the B.C. Liberals in 2009, 2010 and again in 2011.

I caught your reference to a possible prohibited donation to the NDP on CKNW and we immediately checked the information you provided and found what we believe may be the charity in question.

The next morning – and a day before you wrote to us – we filed a complaint with Elections BC regarding this donation. We immediately posted that fact to our Facebook page. We will await the response of Elections BC before making any statement about this or other alleged prohibited donations to the NDP, as we did with the Vancouver Art Gallery Association's donation to the B.C. Liberal party.

I raise this because I want to assure you that we do not treat political parties differently in this regard. Political parties should not be soliciting or accepting donations from charities, even if it was permitted under the Act or if it's the BC NDP, Liberals or any other party doing the soliciting. Charitable donations are simply too hard to come by under the government's current austerity measures to then have those donations used for partisan purposes.

In fact, it was your government that introduced Bill 59 which prohibited political donations from registered charities and organizations with a charitable purpose. I'm sure we both agree as to the appropriateness of such legislation, but this does not dismiss the fact that your party accepted at least two such donations in 2011. It also accepted a donation from Wilfred Hurd, a former Liberal MLA, that he later expensed to Simon Fraser University, a publicly funded organization and registered charity.

In regards to your comments over IntegrityBC's funding, when our organization was launched the principal funder, Wayne Crookes, participated in a number of media interviews to discuss his reasons for funding the organization, including on CKNW, CBC, CFX and the Globe and Mail. A video was posted to our website and our YouTube channel, where he goes into his reasons at greater length. His bio is posted on our website as well. All of this was done proactively by IntegrityBC. While we have received a number of donations since our launch, they do not begin to approach the generosity of Mr. Crookes, who is by far the major donor to IntegrityBC.

I hope that in making these comments that you were not trying to imply – without proof – that there are other major donors that we have not disclosed, because I can assure you that there are no such donors. When this

changes we will be as proactive in their disclosure as we were with Mr. Crookes.

As you know, it is not required that donors to non-profit societies be disclosed without their consent. For instance, Smart Tax Alliance (a non-partisan organization) did not disclose any of its donors during the recent HST referendum.

IntegrityBC's campaign for electoral finance reform is seeking many of the changes that were introduced, passed and toughened at the federal level by the very two federal parties that together form the "coalition" that underpins your government.

I would welcome the opportunity to meet with you to discuss this campaign further. On two occasions in 2011 we wrote each Liberal MLA requesting the opportunity to meet and discuss our ideas. Despite your comments on CKNW about the accessibility of Liberal MLAs, not a single one took us up on this invitation which is regrettable.

Perhaps we can have lunch on my next visit to Vancouver or yours to Victoria?

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Dermod", with a large, sweeping flourish underneath.

Dermod Travis
Executive Director