



## NEWS RELEASE

### NEW RCMP OVERSIGHT AGENCY DISAPPOINTING: YUKON NEW DEMOCRATS

(June 14, 2010) -- Yukon New Democratic Party leader Elizabeth Hanson joins New Democrat Public Safety Critic Don Davies (Vancouver-Kingsway) and Member of Parliament Nathan Cullen (Skeena-Bulkley Valley) to express disappointment in the changes to RCMP oversight announced today by the federal government. "The new civilian review and complaints body lacks key powers" said Hanson.

"Today's announcement is only a partial victory for the Canadian public," said Davies. "New Democrats have worked long and hard to improve accountability and oversight of the RCMP. The power to compel evidence and testimony, and the power to conduct joint investigations are vital tools for an oversight agency. These changes represent an important step forward. The government has begun to listen to Canadians and recognized that the status quo is insufficient to restore public confidence in the RCMP."

Although both the federal and Yukon NDP see the government's proposal as a good first step, it misses the mark by failing to empower the new agency to make binding recommendations to the RCMP commissioner. The proposal also fails to create an agency with any force, since primary investigations into incidents of death or serious bodily harm will largely be contracted out to provincial or municipal police forces or still conducted by the RCMP themselves.

"I am encouraged that the government has announced reforms that were suggested a long time ago. Regrettably this bill does not go far enough," said Cullen. "The new Agency lacks power to make binding recommendations to ensure follow through on needed changes. This completely undermines any new powers in the bill"

Along with public interest groups, civil rights advocates and RCMP officers themselves, the federal and Yukon NDP have called for improved oversight of Canada's national police force. Last November, Cullen introduced a Private Members Bill (C-472) that would have established a civilian investigation service for the RCMP.

Cullen's private members bill would create a national body guaranteeing fully independent investigations and oversight of the RCMP that Canadians can count on. "The government must take the next step, and allow binding recommendations and full civilian investigation at the RCMP. What we don't need is a larger watchdog that still has no teeth."

The bill does not address public concerns about police investigating themselves and would not have changed any circumstances in the case of Raymond Silverfox, Robert Dziekanski, Ian Bush, or any of the other high-profile incidents that have driven calls for reform.