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## **New report: Alberta's whistleblower legislation ineffective Fails to protect whistleblowers and does not ensure allegations will be investigated**

EDMONTON – A new report released this morning by the Parkland Institute finds that Alberta's new whistleblower legislation will be ineffective in terms of protecting those who blow the whistle on incompetence or corruption, and will not ensure that allegations are properly investigated.

The report, entitled *Shooting the Messenger: The Need for Effective Whistleblower Protection in Alberta*, draws on in-depth knowledge of whistleblowing in Canada and extensive international research to assess Alberta's new Public Interest Disclosure (Whistleblower Protection) Act.

"There are serious problems with Alberta's legislation," says report author David Hutton. "Rather than drawing on best-practices and established research from the around the world, as we have done in this report, the law in Alberta sets a new low, even within Canada, in terms of exposing wrongdoing, protection of witnesses, and transparency."

The report highlights that Alberta's law contains no remedies for whistleblowers who suffer reprisals, provides no mechanism to challenge the Commissioner's decisions, and allows the activities of the Commissioner to remain secret.

"Recent cases such as Evan Vokes going public with concerns about TransCanada Pipeline's safety record, Dr. John O'Connor's discovery of high cancer rates downstream of the tarsands, and even Dr. Raj Sherman's exposition of the crisis in Alberta's emergency rooms all highlight the need for effective whistleblower protection," says Parkland's research director Shannon Stunden Bower. "Unfortunately, there is no indication that this new law would have accomplished different results either for the individuals involved or for the public interest in any of those cases."

Using research and examples from other jurisdictions, the report outlines how others have secured effective whistleblower laws, and also describes the main barriers that exist to passing strong legislation. It concludes by making a series of evidence-based recommendations for how whistleblower protection in Alberta can be improved.

The Parkland Institute is a non-partisan public policy research institute in the Faculty of Arts at the University of Alberta. The report *Shooting the Messenger* is available for download on the Parkland website at <http://parklandinstitute.ca>.

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