

# NEWS RELEASE

British Columbia Civil Liberties Association  
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## **B.C. Civil Liberties Association Calls for Sunsetting of Anti-Terrorism Powers on Preventive Detentions and Investigative Hearings**

The B.C. Civil Liberties Association is calling on all federal political parties and Members of Parliament to allow the *Anti-Terrorism Act's* (ATA) preventive detentions and investigative hearing provisions to sunset and not be renewed.

BCCLA Executive Director Murray Mollard: “Back in the fall of 2001, the BCCLA urged our Parliamentarians to demonstrate careful deliberation regarding Canada’s response to the heinous crimes of September 11, 2001. Instead, Canada’s Parliament quickly passed the *Anti-Terrorism Act*, a law of breathtaking scope that threatens many of Canada’s most cherished civil liberties. It is time to reverse this hastily conceived law.”

Investigative hearings permit law enforcement and security agents to force individuals to answer questions relating to an investigation of a terrorism offence even if they are not a suspect in a terrorist investigation. Preventive detentions authorize the arrest and detention of someone on mere suspicion of a terrorist activity without charges being laid.

Magnifying the extraordinary nature of these clauses is a definition of terrorist activity that is overly broad. As the BCCLA noted in its submission to Parliamentary Committees reviewing the ATA in 2005 and 2006, this overly broad definition may result in the RCMP and CSIS focusing their anti-terrorist investigations on religious and ideological groups. The BCCLA gathered evidence of this problem and submitted it to Parliament as part of our brief on the ATA.

Visit: <http://www.bccla.org/othercontent/curbing%20excess.pdf>

Canadians were sold on the need for the ATA to *prevent* terrorism. Instead, these provisions are now being justified as necessary to address serious investigative errors by the RCMP and CSIS involving the Air India bombing over twenty years ago.

We urge all Canadians to encourage their Members of Parliament to not reinstate preventive detentions and investigative hearings.

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