



NEWS RELEASE

PIVOT
equality lifts everyone

Pivot and B.C. Civil Liberties to boycott the police complaints process

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE – July 31, 2008

Vancouver – At a press conference on Thursday, Pivot Legal Society and the B.C. Civil Liberties Association formally announced that they have joined forces to boycott the province-wide police complaints system.

BCCLA and Pivot, along with the Coalition of People with Disabilities, Justice for Girls, VANDU and other non-profit organizations who deal with policing issues, are withdrawing their active assistance to complainants until the provincial government makes urgently needed changes to the Police Act to reform the police complaints process. The organizations are calling for immediate legislative reform, and effective immediately will boycott the 'public trust' police complaint process, which deals with complaints of misconduct by specific officers, including allegations of the use of excessive force.

Micheal Vonn, Policy Director of the BCCLA stressed that both organizations are committed to seeing the police complaints system work: "We want the Office of the Police Complaint Commissioner to have the tools it needs to make this process work. In the interim, we need to focus our efforts on helping people find some means of redress."

Kenneth Glofcheskie, a Downtown Eastside resident who was recently searched and detained at a park in Vancouver's Downtown Eastside, has no faith in the complaints system: "They threw me to the ground and broke my arm, and then refused to call ambulance. I told them I was going to file a complaint against them and they just laughed at me." Glofcheskie will be filing a civil action in small claims court with the support of Pivot Legal Society

"We have seen the results of this system at the ground level and simply do not believe that it works," said Douglas King, a lawyer who heads the policing campaign at the Pivot Legal Society. "At this point we believe that it is more productive to help people seek restitution through the courts rather than participate in a system that is so hopelessly unbalanced."