



## NEWS RELEASE

British Columbia Civil Liberties Association  
November 30, 2009

For immediate release

### **CBC frees airwaves for political ads after BCCLA intervenes**

The CBC has reversed course and will now allow political advertisements on its airwaves outside of election periods. Advocacy by the BCCLA, combined with a recent Supreme Court of Canada decision, resulted in the policy change.

“We are pleased that the CBC has been so responsive to our concerns,” said Robert Holmes, President of the BCCLA. “The Supreme Court of Canada has been unambiguous that bans on political advertising by government or government actors are unacceptable.”

The BCCLA was initially alerted to the policy when a federal Conservative Party advertisement was rejected by the CBC. In response to correspondence from the BCCLA, the network defended its policy, arguing that it was not subject to the Charter of Rights and Freedoms. The BCCLA then urged all parties in Parliament and the CRTC to take on the issue, and filed a CRTC complaint.

“The CBC has made a decision that protects the principles of fair speech that Canadians hold dear,” said Holmes. “This policy makes the CBC a leader in ensuring that Canadian political issues are able to participate equally with credit cards and laundry detergent for the eyes of the nation.”

The BCCLA intervened in the *Greater Vancouver Transportation Authority* Supreme Court of Canada case between the Canadian Federation of Students and Translink when Translink attempted to prevent the CFS from running ads with political content. The Court held that the political advertisement ban was unconstitutional. One of the core mandates of the BCCLA is to educate policy makers and the public on the importance of free expression to a democratic society.

#### **MEDIA CONTACTS:**

Robert Holmes, President, 604-838-6856  
David Eby, Executive Director, 778-865-7997