



## NEWS RELEASE

British Columbia Civil Liberties Association  
October 8, 2009

For immediate release

### **Olympic police reps to get legal observer training**

**Vancouver, B.C.** – Both the Vancouver Police Department and the Integrated Security Unit for the 2010 Olympic Games have accepted the B.C. Civil Liberties Association's offer to provide legal observer training to senior officers.

"It's gold medal news that the two police forces responsible for securing the Games want to be fully briefed on this very important accountability program," said Robert Holmes, President of the BCCLA. "Through this special training, we hope to ensure that the neutral, independent, accountable role of our legal observers is respected in 2010."

In September, the BCCLA made a written offer to both the Vancouver Police Department and the Integrated Security Unit to provide them with identical training to that received by civilians participating in the joint BCCLA / Pivot legal observer program. In addition, the BCCLA offered to provide photographs of uniforms and copies of all training materials to the police forces in order to ensure that the observer role was fully understood by security teams.

"The more that front line officers are aware of this program and it is demystified for them, the safer our observers are and the more easily the observers will be able to do their critically important work," said Holmes. "Some steps taken by government and VANOC have shown less respect for basic freedoms than the law requires. But this move by law enforcement agencies is a positive sign and we applaud it."

Holmes noted that Vancouver will be under considerable international scrutiny during the Games, and suggested Vancouver could be a showcase for how democratic rights are respected at international events.

A date has yet to be set for the special law enforcement legal observer training.

#### **MEDIA CONTACTS:**

Robert Holmes, President, BCCLA (604) 681-1310  
David Eby, Executive Director, BCCLA (778) 865-7997  
Laura Track, Lawyer, Pivot Legal Society (604) 721-6349