



OFFICE OF THE
INFORMATION &
PRIVACY COMMISSIONER
for British Columbia

Protecting privacy. Promoting transparency.

The Times Colonist
Letter to the Editor
July 14, 2015

Law balances privacy, accountability

Editor:

Your editorial states that privacy law should not be used as a shield against government accountability. I couldn't agree more.

The *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act* provides for disclosure of personal information by public agencies in many circumstances, including in relation to scrutiny of employees' and officials' decisions and actions, the salaries and expenses of employees, and in a public inquiry. In these cases the Act favours the disclosure of this information because it serves a public accountability purpose.

At the same time, the law provides strong protection of citizens' privacy. It ensures British Columbians' sensitive personal information is robustly protected by government.

Public bodies have the critical task of balancing their legal obligation to protect privacy with being open and accountable to citizens. My office is charged with independent oversight to ensure this is done in a lawful manner.

Twenty-two years ago the Legislative Assembly of British Columbia enacted legislation securing our fundamental information rights. This law has stood the test of time and has proven to enhance our right to know and our right of privacy.

Elizabeth Denham
Information and Privacy Commissioner for British Columbia