

Time to ?shine light? on Government, says Trudeau

It is said that sunshine is the best disinfectant but, unfortunately, not a lot of light shines on our federal government these days. Access to information requests are taking longer and arrive blacked out. Data is released in grainy photocopies, not electronically. Withholding information has become the default position. Information paid for by taxpayers is hidden from them.

Under my leadership, the Liberal Party has begun to reverse this trend and raise the bar on openness and transparency. A year ago we began publishing our own caucus' spending every quarter, which led to all-party agreement on the proactive disclosure of parliamentary expenses.

The next step is the introduction of the Transparency Act, which will improve openness not only in Parliament, but in our government.

Right now, Canada's Access to Information Act is stuck in the 1980s. The Transparency Act will pull it into the modern era. This Act will entrench in law that all government information must be ?open by default? and available in modern formats. It eliminates all fees for Access to Information beyond the initial \$5 request fee. It will initiate a review and modernization of the entire Access to Information system. It strengthens the mandate of the Information Commissioner by giving them the power to enforce information laws. And it ends the secret nature of the House of Commons' Board of Internal Economy.

These are first, tangible steps?within the limit of what can be proposed in a Private Member's Bill?that can be put into law this session. None are partisan. And all will be debated and voted on by all MPs in the fall.

The Transparency Act builds on the positive steps we have taken and will be strengthened as I consult with Canadians and other Parliamentarians when travelling across the country this summer. I am convinced that by working together we can achieve all-party consensus to pass this bill and bring a bit of sunshine back to our government.

Justin Trudeau
Leader, Liberal Party of Canada