



PRESENTATIONS & SPEECHES

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Opening remarks before the House of Commons Standing Committee on Access to Information, Privacy and Ethics

**Honourable Konrad W. von Finckenstein, C.M., K.C. –
Conflict of Interest and Ethics Commissioner**
Ottawa, Ontario, May 4, 2026

Mr. Chair and honourable members of the Committee, thank you for inviting me to speak about the Commissioner's Office's 2025-2026 budgetary submission and the role it plays in safeguarding public confidence in the integrity of Parliament and government institutions.

Joining me today are Anne-Marie Roy, Manager of Financial Services, and Melanie Rushworth, Director of Communications, Outreach and Planning.

The Commissioner's Office administers the *Conflict of Interest Code for Members of the House of Commons* and the *Conflict of Interest Act*. For ministers, their staff and order-in-council appointees, these regimes apply to approximately 3,200 elected and appointed officials, touching nearly every level of federal decision-making.

We take a mandate-focused approach that advances three key objectives.

First, we help elected and appointed officials identify and manage conflicts of interest, ensuring that competent and qualified people can enter and leave public service while maintaining the highest ethical standards.

Second, we review and report on allegations of conflict of interest in a fair, independent, and transparent manner.

Third, and most importantly, we help Canadians maintain confidence that the actions of elected and appointed federal officials are free from conflicts of interest and improper influence. Ultimately, all of our work supports this key objective.

The Commissioner's Office employs approximately 50 people. Our organizational structures, policies and processes are designed to support efficient operations and responsible stewardship of public funds.

Efficiency is also central to our annual spending review.

For 2026-2027, we are requesting a modest budgetary increase of \$227,000. This represents a 2.5% increase and would bring our total budget to just under \$9.4 million. The increase is largely attributable to cost pressures, including a 2% salary increase consistent with other parliamentary entities and corresponding adjustments to the employer portion of the employee benefit plan, which is set by Treasury Board.

Our largest operational expense is our information technology services agreement, which we are obliged to make with the House of Commons, which represents \$878,000 or 57% of our operating budget. We work closely with our House partners to ensure these systems remain secure and reliable, supporting both operational continuity and the protection of sensitive information.

Ms. Roy, Ms. Rushworth, and I would be pleased to answer the Committee's questions about the Office, its finances, or its operations.