



PRESENTATIONS & SPEECHES

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Opening remarks before the House of Commons Standing Committee on Public Accounts/ArriveCAN

**Honourable Konrad W. von Finckenstein, C.M., K.C. –
Conflict of Interest and Ethics Commissioner**
Ottawa, Ontario, August 8, 2024

Thank you for inviting me to discuss Report 1, ArriveCAN, of the 2024 Reports of the Auditor General of Canada.

With me today is Michael Aquilino, Legal Counsel at the Office.

As Conflict of Interest and Ethics Commissioner, my role is to help elected and appointed public officials manage conflicts of interest.

We administer the *Conflict of Interest Act* for appointed officials like ministers, their staff, heads of Crown corporations, deputy ministers, and members of various boards and tribunals. We also administer the *Conflict of Interest Code for Members of the House of Commons*.

Under the Act, when reporting public office holders are first appointed, we gather information about what they own, what they owe, and what they do. This helps us see whether they may have any conflicts of interest and advise them on how to manage or avoid them. This could include setting up a conflict of interest screen.

Throughout their time as public office holders, we receive updates from them and review their information. We give them ongoing confidential advice and guidance on questions like accepting gifts, when to step back or recuse themselves from discussions, and the rules that will follow them after they leave office.

Under the Code, we go through a similar process with Members. It is something you are all familiar with.

All publicly shareable information about reporting public office holders and Members is available on our website's public registry.

Under both the Act and the Code, we focus on private interests that might affect financial or business decisions for personal gain.

Essentially, the two main purposes of our work are, first, to help elected and appointed public officials recognize and manage conflicts of interest. And second, to facilitate the movement of qualified people in and out of public service without issue.

Regarding the current issue of ArriveCAN, I understand there are ongoing investigations by other organizations. To our knowledge, no persons subject to the Act or the Code were involved in these matters. Hence, we have no jurisdiction and I have no comment to make.

I am happy to answer your questions.