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**Opening remarks before the Senate Standing Committee on National Finance /
Main Estimates 2024-2025**

**Honourable Konrad W. von Finckenstein, C.M., K.C. –
Conflict of Interest and Ethics Commissioner**
Ottawa, Ontario, September 17, 2024

Mr. Chair and honourable members of the Committee, thank you for inviting me to speak with you about the Office of the Conflict of Interest and Ethics Commissioner's budget for 2024-2025.

The Commissioner's Office consists of around 50 professionals who are doing everything possible to ensure some 3,200 people subject to either the *Conflict of Interest Act* or the *Conflict of Interest Code for Members of the House of Commons* avoid conflicts of interest.

Our Office has a two-fold purpose. One, to help elected and appointed public officials avoid and manage conflicts of interest. And two, to facilitate the movement of qualified people in and out of public service. These principles reflect my approach to the role of Commissioner. Ultimately, our goal is to safeguard public confidence in the integrity of Parliament and government institutions.

All experienced and competent people will, over time, be exposed to potential conflicts of interest. To me, this means the credibility of the advice and guidance we provide needs to be helpful, innovative and timely. You will see this in our educational offerings throughout the year.

Our Main Estimates include funding to ensure the continued growth of the Office's education and outreach work. It allows us to develop subject-specific education session to meet the needs of those subject to the Act or Code. The past spring we launched an online course tailored to meet mandatory training requirements for elected Members under the Code. We are currently developing a similar on-demand course for public office holders under the Act.

Our budgetary process is unique in that our budget is not approved by any minister. We prepare the Main Estimates for what the Office will require in the following year. We submit our Main Estimates to the Speaker of the House of Commons for consideration and then transmit them to the President of the Treasury Board. The Treasury Board then includes our Main Estimates as part of its overall submission to the House of Commons.

As for the numbers, there is no increase to our operations budget. We asked for and received an increase to our personnel budget of just under 3%, which will be used largely to fund economic salary increases and salary increments. 83% of our budget is dedicated to salaries and the employee benefit plan.

I would be happy to answer the Committee's questions about the Office, its finances, and operations.