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Maurice Vellacott, MP
Saskatoon-Wanuskewin

Vellacott pressed for crucial change to Canada Elections Act

For Immediate Release

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OTTAWA – Conservative MP Maurice Vellacott (Saskatoon-Wanuskewin) over the years has pushed for voter identification changes in direct conversation and correspondence with the Chief Electoral Officer, Jean-Pierre Kingsley. Over his 9-plus years as an MP, Vellacott has also had similar discussions with other MPs and generally found support for such proposals.

Yesterday, Rob Nicholson, Leader of the Conservative Government in the House of Commons and Minister for Democratic Reform, tabled a bill to amend the Canada Elections Act to improve the integrity of the electoral process. On June 22, 2006, the Committee on Procedure and House Affairs tabled its Thirteenth Report, entitled *Improving the Integrity of the Electoral Process: Recommendations for Legislative Change*. The purpose of the bill is to reduce the opportunity for electoral fraud and improve the integrity of the electoral process.

Vellacott is confident that this bill, in addition to the Federal Accountability Act, will go a long way in further fostering and protecting Canada's democratic electoral process.

Vellacott is especially pleased that a key reform in this bill is the introduction of a uniform voter identification system at the polls. Photo identification will be required, and may only be waived through more stringent alternative means of demonstrating proof of identity.

The bill also introduces amendments aimed at: improving the accuracy of the National Register of Electors by permitting voters to voluntarily confirm their Canadian citizenship for the purpose of updating their information; facilitating eligible individuals to exercise their right to vote; creating measures to improve communication between election officials, candidates, parties, and the electorate; and making operational improvements to the electoral process, based on suggestions by the Chief Electoral Officer (CEO).

Vellacott says that, "A well-functioning electoral system is at the heart of a representative democracy." Vellacott is optimistic that there will be a consensus among the members of the Standing Committee and other Parliamentarians to pass this bill and ensure that our electoral process commands the full confidence of Canadians.

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For further comment, call (613) 992-1966 or 297-2249