



The Office of the
Ombudsperson

B.C.'s Independent Voice for Fairness

— 40 —
years
1979-2019

INDEPENDENT OFFICES OF THE LEGISLATURE

What are they and why do we need them?

WHAT ARE OFFICES OF THE LEGISLATURE?

- Independent – not part of government
- Report directly to the legislature, not to a minister
- People in charge of these offices are appointed for fixed terms by members of the legislature
- Not here to support or defend government, here to have oversight over what they do
- Some call us “watchdogs”

WHO ARE THE OFFICERS OF THE LEGISLATURE?

Ombudsperson

One of eight Officers of the Legislature:

Chief Electoral Officer

Auditor General

Members' Conflict of Interest Commissioner

Information and Privacy Commissioner

Representative for Children and Youth

Merit Commissioner

Police Complaint Commissioner

Ombudsperson

Soon to be nine: Human Rights Commissioner

WHY DO WE NEED THESE INDEPENDENT OFFICES?

Make sure government is following the rules

We do investigations into concerns that individuals bring to our respective offices and look at broader systemic issues

Make sure government is accountable for its actions

We make recommendations to government to make things better and work with them to make sure change is made and best practices are being followed

Make sure the public knows about gaps we find

We issue public reports and media releases to bring public attention to problems we find

WHAT KINDS OF ISSUES COME TO OUR OFFICES?

“I wasn’t allowed to see my school records.”

“I was treated unfairly.”

“I have a problem with my social worker.”

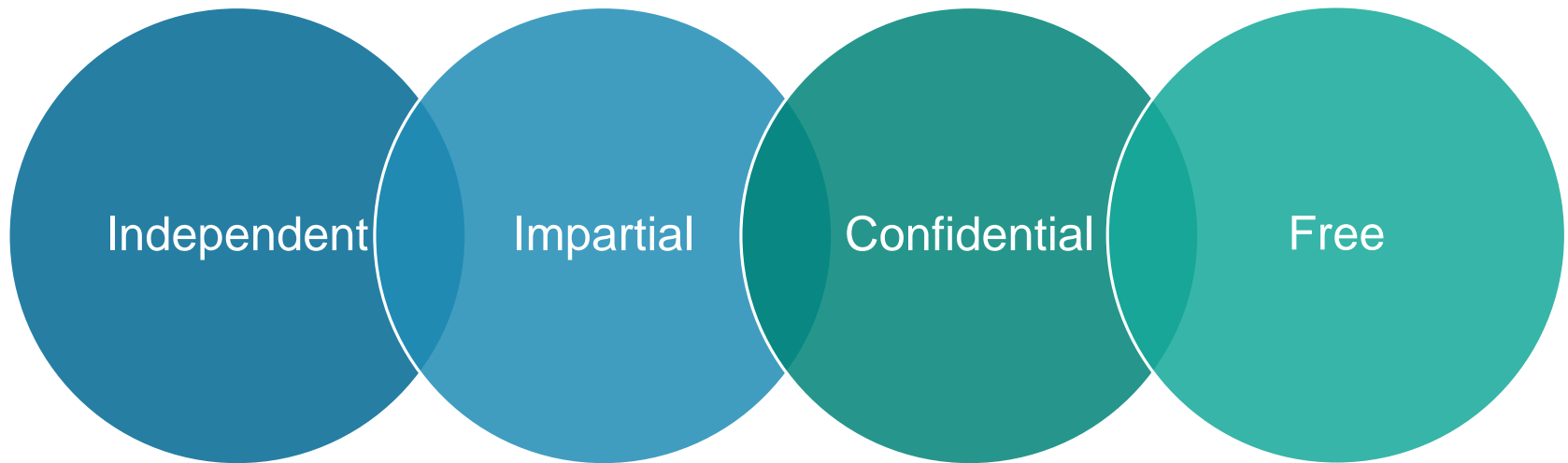
“They told me I didn’t get the job because I’m Asian”

“They’re spending too much money at the legislature.”



WHAT IS AN OMBUDSPERSON?

Promotes and Fosters Fairness



“...with the establishment of an Ombudsman in British Columbia we will have (an organization which) can...provide additional service for our citizens, move aside the bureaucratic roadblocks, wade through the red tape...and recommend improvements to administrative practice and administrative procedure.”

The Honourable Garde Gardom, B.C. Attorney General

THE WORK OF THE OMBUDSPERSON IN RELATION TO POLICY

We investigate whether government is treating people fairly. What does that mean?

When it comes to policy, fairness means that policies are:

- being followed the way they're supposed to be
- consistent with the law
- not discriminatory, oppressive or unfair
- being applied evenly and consistently to everyone
- being clearly communicated to the people they impact

POLICY PITFALLS WE SEE

Inconsistent with legislation

Not designed with diversity in mind

Discriminatory in practice

CASE STUDIES

Independent offices make recommendations. What should government do?

You decide.

FINAL THOUGHTS

**Youth deserve to
be heard**

**Question
things that seem
unfair**

**Youth voices
matter**



Questions?

**CONTACT US:
1-800-567-FAIR**

www.bcombudsperson.ca

947 Fort Street Victoria
PO BOX 9039 STN PROV GOVT
VICTORIA BC V8W 9A5

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