
News Release

GOVERNMENT RE-INTRODUCES LEGISLATION TARGETING IDENTITY THEFT

OTTAWA, March 31, 2009 – The Honourable Rob Nicholson, P.C., Q.C., M. P. for Niagara Falls, Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, today re-introduced tough legislation that will target identity theft, a fast-growing problem in Canada and throughout the world.

“Organized crime and modern technology are changing the criminal landscape, making identity theft easier than ever,” said Minister Nicholson “This legislation will provide police with the tools they need to protect Canada’s families, seniors, and businesses from the numerous harms of identity crime.”

The proposed legislation would create three new offences targeting the early stages of identity-related crime, all of which are subject to 5-year maximum prison sentences. The offences are:

- **Obtaining and possessing identity information** with the intent to use the information deceptively, dishonestly or fraudulently in the commission of a crime;
- **Trafficking in identity information**, an offence that targets those who transfer or sell information to another person with knowledge of or recklessness toward the possible criminal use of the information; and
- **Unlawfully possessing or trafficking in government-issued identity documents** that contain the information of another person.

Additional *Criminal Code* amendments would create new offences of fraudulently redirecting or causing redirection of a person’s mail, possessing a counterfeit Canada Post mail key, and possessing instruments for extracting and copying debit and credit card information. It would also add new offences and certain existing offences to the list of offences for which a wiretap order may be obtained. This legislation would also give courts the power to, as part of a sentence, order an offender to pay restitution to a victim of identity theft or fraud where the victim has incurred expenses related to rehabilitating their identity.

“Our Government will continue to take steps to ensure the safety and security of our citizens,” said Minister Nicholson. “This legislation helps combat the complex and growing problem of identity theft and will play a key role in our efforts to fight organized crime.”

For an online version of the legislation, visit www.parl.gc.ca.

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