Canadian Civil Liberties Association | Opening Remarks
Senate Standing Committee on Legal and Constitutional Affairs

February 12, 2026

Mr Chair, honourable members of the committee, good afternoon.

My name is Tamir Israel and I am Director of the Privacy, Surveillance and Technology Program at the Canadian Civil Liberties Association (CCLA).

We are pleased to appear before you today to speak to part 4 of Bill C-4.

Part 4 proposes to immunize federal political parties from future and historical violations of provincial privacy laws while putting no meaningful protections in place at the federal level.

At a time when data-driven political campaigning around the world is becoming more privacy intrusive with greater potential for shaping or even manipulating our political discourse, Part 4 is a step in the wrong direction.

Political parties are subjecting people to intrusive scrutiny, and the ability to leverage this data-rich ecosystem to manipulate the electorate in real time is growing daily.

Data-driven political campaigning is also not limited to elections, but instead is becoming central to how political parties are interacting with the public every day of every year.

In the United States, one 2020 study reported that a political party had amassed more than 3,000 data points on every single voter in the United States, while online ads have used demographic information to target Black Americans with the express intention of "deterring" them from voting.

Data-driven campaigning increasingly attempts to guess people's detailed psychometric profiles, as well as a range of financial, political, demographic, religious and other characteristics. Frequently, the rich profiles political parties rely on are outdated or inaccurate, yet these profiles determine what political messaging each voter receives.

Against this backdrop, Bill C-4 fails to include any of the hallmarks that are integral components of any effective privacy framework and that are staples of privacy protection in Canada and around the world.

It lacks any substantive limitations on what political parties can do with people's personal data, as long as some measure of public notification is provided.

There are no governance requirements in place to ensure notification is robust and accurate. There is no obligation to provide more detailed or fine-grained explanations to the

electorate regarding how their personal information is processed, nor is there any mechanism for redress.

Part 4 categorically immunizes political parties from any obligation to provide individuals access to their personal information and correct it.

Importantly, there is no regulatory framework for independently scrutinizing how personal data is being amassed, kept and deployed by political parties.

This approach leaves privacy protection largely to the discretion of the political parties themselves and encourages a race to the bottom on data driven campaigning.

Part 4 does not stop at failing to put in place any effective privacy framework at the federal level, it removes any obligations federal political parties might have under provincial laws and immunizes them from historical violations.

The legislative process that brought us Part 4 raises additional concerns.

Part 4's inclusion in a finance Bill, the lack of any meaningful debate regarding its implications in the House, and the fast tracking that's been imposed on this committee for its consideration of Part 4 are all deeply concerning.

It represents an attempt by political parties to shield themselves from accountability for their privacy practices.

People in Canada do not want this lawless approach to their personal data and expect parliament to put in place reasonable rules for how political parties collect, use and disclose personal information.

We urge you to delete Part 4 from this legislative proposal and recommend applying Canada's federal privacy law to political parties instead.

Thank you and I look forward to any questions you might have.