



Mark Furey
Attorney General of Nova Scotia
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Dear Mr. Attorney General,

We write to you on behalf of the NDP Caucus to ask that you direct police forces in Nova Scotia to end the practice of street checks immediately. We understand “street checks” as incidents where individuals are arbitrarily stopped or detained by the police and/or when personal information is collected and logged by the police outside of an investigation into a specific incident of crime. Our Caucus, legal experts across the country, and members of the communities affected have identified that this practice is disproportionately exercised on African Nova Scotians and other racialized peoples, causes distress to the individuals involved, and has greatly eroded confidence in our police forces. Nova Scotia has an opportunity to mitigate further harm now by immediately establishing a moratorium on the practice of street checks.

Section 8 of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms guarantees all citizens security against unreasonable search and seizure. It is the opinion of our Caucus that the practice of street checks and the subsequent collection and storage of personal data is in violation of S.8.

While calls to end the practice have been met with the suggestion that ending the use of street checks would impede effective community policing, this does not need to be the case. Police officers have recourse to use warrants for searches and arrests, as well as investigative detention related to a crime. An end to street checks would not prevent officers from speaking with residents informally in the course of their duties, but it would prevent the collection and retention of data from citizens who have not committed a crime and are not under investigation.

We are aware that University of Toronto Criminologist Dr. Scot Wortley has been contracted by the Nova Scotia Human Rights Commission to conduct an analysis of the Halifax Regional Police data on street checks, and are happy that this work is being done. However, a moratorium on



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this practice should be enacted now, while Dr. Wortley's research is ongoing. We know that in HRM African Nova Scotians are three times more likely to be stopped than other individuals. These stops have a chilling effect on communities' trust of law enforcement officers and create legal records on individuals who have not been charged with any crime.

Our Caucus supports the communities calling for a moratorium and is calling for an end to the disproportionate surveillance of people of colour in our communities. We urge that as Attorney General, you take every measure available to you and the provincial government to ensure police end this practice.

Yours sincerely,



Lisa Roberts
MLA, Halifax Needham
NSNDP Spokesperson for African Nova Scotia Affairs



Claudia Chender, LLB.
MLA, Dartmouth South
NSNDP Spokesperson for Justice

