

# Editorial & Opinions

COMMENTS AND VIEWS FROM NEWS/NORTH AND LETTERS TO THE EDITOR



Published Mondays

**YELLOWKNIFE OFFICE:**  
Box 2820, Yellowknife, NT, X1A 2R1  
Phone: (867) 873-4031  
Fax: (867) 873-8507  
Toll free: (855) 873-6675  
E-mail: [nrsi@nrsi.com](mailto:nrsi@nrsi.com)  
[editorial@nrsi.com](mailto:editorial@nrsi.com)  
[advertising@nrsi.com](mailto:advertising@nrsi.com)  
[circulation@nrsi.com](mailto:circulation@nrsi.com)  
[nrsiadmin@nrsi.com](mailto:nrsiadmin@nrsi.com)  
Website: [www.nrsi.com](http://www.nrsi.com)



CANADIAN  
COMMUNITY  
NEWSPAPER  
AWARD 2016

**DEH CHO OFFICE, FORT SIMPSON:**  
April Hudson, Bureau Chief  
Phone: (867) 695-2900  
Fax: (867) 695-3766  
E-mail: [dehcho@nrsi.com](mailto:dehcho@nrsi.com)  
Website: [www.nrsi.com/dehcho](http://www.nrsi.com/dehcho)



**SOUTH SLAVE OFFICE, HAY RIVER:**  
Paul Gickford, Bureau Chief  
Phone: (867) 874-2802 Fax: (867) 874-2804  
E-mail: [editor@ssimicro.com](mailto:editor@ssimicro.com)

**MACKENZIE DELTA OFFICE, INUVIK:**  
Sarah Ladik  
Phone: (867) 777-4545 Fax: (867) 777-4412  
E-mail: [newsinuvik@nrsi.com](mailto:newsinuvik@nrsi.com)  
Website: [www.nrsi.com/inuvik](http://www.nrsi.com/inuvik)

**RAFFIN OFFICE, IQALUIT:**  
Phone: (867) 979-5990 Fax: (867) 979-6010  
E-mail: [editor@nunavutnews.com](mailto:editor@nunavutnews.com)  
Website: [www.nrsi.com/nunavutnews](http://www.nrsi.com/nunavutnews)

**KIVALLIQ OFFICE, RANKIN INLET:**  
Darrell Greer - Bureau Chief  
Phone: (867) 645-3223 Fax: (867) 645-3225  
E-mail: [kivalliq@nrsi.com](mailto:kivalliq@nrsi.com)  
Website: [www.nrsi.com/kivalliq](http://www.nrsi.com/kivalliq)

**PUBLISHER:** J.W. (Sig) Sigvaldson - [jsig@nrsi.com](mailto:jsig@nrsi.com)  
**GENERAL MANAGER:** Michael Scott - [mccott@nrsi.com](mailto:mccott@nrsi.com)  
**MANAGING EDITOR:** Bruce Valby - [valby@nrsi.com](mailto:valby@nrsi.com)

**ACCOUNTING:** [nrsiadmin@nrsi.com](mailto:nrsiadmin@nrsi.com)  
Judy Triffo • Florie Mariano • Saleeh Wagas  
Elain Asombrado

**Senior editor:** Mike W. Bryant  
**Assignment editor:** James O'Connor  
**Photo editor:** Walter Strong

**News editors**  
Mike W. Bryant • Karen McKinley  
Josh Long • Randi Beers  
James O'Connor

**Sports:** James McCarthy - [sports@nrsi.com](mailto:sports@nrsi.com)  
**Business:** Jessica Davey-Quantick - [business@nrsi.com](mailto:business@nrsi.com)  
**Arts:** [entertainment@nrsi.com](mailto:entertainment@nrsi.com)

**Reporters:** Kassina Ryder • John McFadden  
Shane Magee • Robin Grant • Kirsten Fenn

**Editorial board:**  
Bruce Valby • Josh Long • Mike W. Bryant  
James O'Connor

**Advertising production**  
**Production co-ordinator:** Jennifer Reyes  
B.V. Logsdon • Diana Mathisen • Zolena Kunderlik

**Customer service:**  
Holly Yestrau

**ADVERTISING**  
[advertising@nrsi.com](mailto:advertising@nrsi.com)  
**Advertising manager:** Petra Mernadi  
**Representatives:** Terry Dobbin • Dawn Janz  
Zerline Rodriguez • Barbara Khivda  
Marlee Currie • Bridget Mackay  
Katrina Deloney • Bradley Filion  
Shelby Brothers

**Features manager:** Beau Stobbs

**CIRCULATION:**  
[circulation@nrsi.com](mailto:circulation@nrsi.com)  
David Hovey • Sy Huyth • Vanessa Frers

**Subscriptions:**  
One year mail \$90 • Two year mail \$125  
Online (entire content) \$50/year  
Individual subscriptions, multiple user rates on request

**NORTHERN NEWS SERVICES LIMITED**  
2001 Northern owned and operated

**Publishers of:**  
Delti Cho Drum • Inuvik Drum  
Kivalliq News • Yellowknife • Hay River Hub  
NWT News/North • Nunavut News/North

**Member of:**  
Canadian Community Newspapers Association  
Ontario Community Newspapers Association  
Manitoba Community Newspapers Association  
Saskatchewan Weekly Newspapers Association  
Alberta Weekly Newspapers Association  
Ontario, Manitoba and Alberta Press Councils  
Yellowknife Chamber of Commerce

Contents copyright - printed in the North  
by Canwest/Grain Processing Limited

**Member of the Ontario Press Council.** The Ontario Press Council was created to defend freedom of the press on behalf of the public and press alike, and to consider specific, unsatisfied complaints from readers about the conduct of the press in gathering and publishing news, opinion and advertising.

Complaints should go to:  
The Ontario Press Council, 2 Carlton St., Suite 1706 Toronto, Ont., M5B 1L5  
E-mail: [info@ontpress.com](mailto:info@ontpress.com) Fax: 1-416-340-8724  
[www.ontpress.com](http://www.ontpress.com)

**SEND US YOUR COMMENTS**

E-mail us at: [editorial@nrsi.com](mailto:editorial@nrsi.com) with the subject line "My opinion" or send mail to News/North at Box 2820, Yellowknife X1A 2R1; or drop your letter off at our office at 5108-50 Street. All letters submitted must be signed with a return address and daytime telephone number. We will do our best to ensure that letters submitted by 3 p.m. on Thursday are printed in Monday's News/North.



Justice Minister Louis Sebert, left, disputed Yellowknife Centre MLA Julie Green's assertion that certain types of criminal record checks that include a person's "record of non-conviction" are doing more harm than good.

# A past that shouldn't haunt you

The routine inclusion of 'non-conviction records' in criminal record checks is simply criminal

**MLA Julie Green:** "Will the Minister ... direct the RCMP to stop issuing records of non-conviction?"  
**Justice Minister Louis Sebert:** "The short answer is 'No.'"

When an MLA demanded the justice minister order the RCMP to stop the "outrageous" practice of issuing enhanced criminal record checks, was she arguing in favour of placing vulnerable people at risk?

When Justice Minister Louis Sebert slammed the door in the Yellowknife Centre rep Julie Green's face, was he perpetuating the argument that the best predictor of future behavior is past-behavior - even if no charges were laid or convictions entered?

There are two clear schools of thought about enhanced criminal record checks - also called vulnerable sector checks - created by the federal government in 2000 to protect children and others coming into contact with people who might do them harm.

One is that, as MLA Green stated in the legislative assembly on Oct. 25, is that it is indeed "outrageous" to think that a person can be denied a job with vulnerable people or forbidden from volunteering with a non-profit group because of a "record of non-conviction" issued by police.

"What we are talking about here is providing records that say that there has been an interaction with the law but not a conviction," Green said in questioning Sebert. "I don't object to having criminal record checks for vulnerable sector individuals or for any others who require them."

The practice of providing profiles of police contact - also referred to as "negative" or "adverse" police contacts - comes when individuals are

asked to supply an enhanced criminal record check.

Now the information is released to the individual, not the person hiring or volunteer chairperson but it is a mandatory requirement of some positions.

"You can't get or keep the job without the criminal record check

and the criminal check is released along with the record of non-conviction, it's all on one page," Green stated. "The injustice of this situation is clear for any fair-minded person. The words 'innocent until proven guilty' come to mind but do they mean anything?"

This longstanding federal policy is one that simply can't be superseded through a rejigging of our policing contract with the RCMP, as Green asked of Sebert.

However, the reason for her questioning the justice minister in the first place is sound.

Just think about it a bit. Should a few interactions with the law - let's say a licence suspension after a roadside checkstop or a couple of police calls over the course of a messy divorce - disqualify you to be a Big Brother? Or to coach your child's soccer team?

The problem is, apart from it indeed being an outrageous intrusion into one's personal privacy, that many people in a position to hire who receive an enhanced criminal

record check will be afraid to green-light a candidate unless the record is spotless.

In a 2015 study entitled, "False promises, hidden costs," the Canadian Civil Liberties Association (CCLA) noted an increasing number of Canadian organizations are incorporating police record checks into their hiring and management practices.

The CCLA stated there is no evidence that broad use of criminal records materially reduces the risk of crime or violent offenses in the workplace.

"To the contrary, systemic barriers to employment undermine the significant efforts and resources put into reintegration and ultimately prejudices community safety," the report stated.

There are movements across the country to re-examine the use of non-conviction records.

For Minister Sebert to glibly brush off Green's inquiry showed either he is truly a hard-line law-and-order politician, or that he's simply afraid of doing any heavy lifting on the file.

We suggest MLA Green re-frame her question for the next session - perhaps better emphasizing the efforts that are being made nationally to change the applicable section of the Criminal Records Act.

She should call on the minister to not wait to see what happens elsewhere but to even step up and take a lead on the issue that is perhaps more important to constituents in the NWT than he realizes.

**THE ISSUE:**  
RIGHT TO PRIVACY

**WE SAY:**  
IS SOMETHING WORTH  
FIGHTING FOR