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HOUSE OF COMMONS  
CHAMBRE DES COMMUNES  
CANADA

Mary Dawson, Commissioner  
Office of the Conflict of Interest and Ethics Commissioner  
Parliament of Canada  
Centre Block, P.O. Box 16  
Ottawa, Ontario  
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July 21, 2015

**Re: Potential abuse of government resources by Minister Pierre Poilievre**

Dear Commissioner,

I am writing to you regarding news reports that Employment Minister Pierre Poilievre appeared at a major government announcement promoting the logo of the Conservative Party of Canada. This follows on the heels of other official Government of Canada announcements where the Minister was joined by several unelected Conservative candidates: Ottawa-Nepean Conservative candidate Andy Wang, Ottawa-West Nepean Conservative candidate Abdul Abdi, Ottawa Vanier Conservative Candidate David Piccini, and Ottawa Centre Conservative Candidate Damian Konstantinakos. As we are on the eve of a national election, I am concerned that a pattern is being set by this minister to abuse his ministerial office to promote the partisan interests of the Conservative Party.

Canadians have grown increasingly cynical about the Conservative government's pattern of framing government spending announcements within an obvious partisan frame. This blurs the lines between the work of government and the narrow interests of the party. With an election looming, this pattern of inappropriate behaviour and abuse of public money will continue, unless clear guidelines are established regarding the responsibilities of ministers in official announcements.

You wrote in 2010 regarding Members of Parliament that *"public spending announcements are government activities, not partisan political activities, and it is not appropriate to brand them with partisan or personal identifiers."*

You made this finding regarding the behaviour of Conservative MPs. As a Minister of the Crown, Mr. Poilievre is held to an even higher standard. In fact, his behaviour in this recent announcement may be in violation of the Ministerial Accountability Guide, which stipulates the actual terms and condition of his appointment.

**The 2011 Accountable Government: a guide for Ministers and Ministers of State Annex A states**

*"Public office holders shall not directly or indirectly use, or allow the use of, government property of any kind, including property leased to the government, for anything other than officially approved activities. In no circumstance should any political activities be performed at a government place of work; nor should any government equipment or material be used for such purposes."*

Ethical Standards: Public office holders shall act with honesty and uphold the highest ethical standards so that public confidence and trust in the integrity, objectivity and impartiality of the government are conserved and enhanced.

Public Scrutiny: Public office holders have an obligation to perform their official duties and arrange their private affairs in a manner that will bear the closest public scrutiny, an obligation that is not fully discharged by simply acting within the law.

Public office holders must also ensure that their political activities are consistent with the obligation to discharge their public duties in a non-partisan manner, so as to ensure that public confidence and trust in the integrity and impartiality of government are conserved and enhanced.

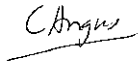
The Guidelines are grounded in one general principle: that a public office holder should not participate in a political activity that is, or that may reasonably be seen to be, incompatible with the public office holder's duty, or otherwise be seen to impair his or her ability to discharge his or her public duties in a politically impartial fashion, or would cast doubt on the integrity or impartiality of the office.

Compliance with these Guidelines is a term and condition of appointment. Before appointment, a public office holder shall certify that he or she will comply with these Guidelines.

It is recognized that there will be circumstances in which either the participation of public office holders in political activities has not been covered under these Guidelines, or the application of these Guidelines is unduly restrictive. The general principle and guiding factors are controlling, and resort should be had to these in all cases. Inquiries about these Guidelines and their interpretation should be addressed to the Privy Council Office (or where the Public Service Employment Act is engaged, the Public Service Commission) before a public office holder commences the proposed activity. Where there is any doubt, public office holders are expected to refrain from the contemplated activity or to resign from office in order to undertake it.

I therefore request that you investigate the actions of Mr. Poilievre and ask you to determine if he violated the actual terms by which he accepted his role as minister of the crown. As well, given that we are on the eve of what may be a very fractious election, I am asking you to lay down clear rules to ensure that taxpayers funds and government offices are not misused for the partisan interests of the Conservative party.

Sincerely



Charlie Angus  
MP Timmins-James Bay  
NDP Ethics Critic