

The NANOS Polls: Mounted Police Members' Legal Fund message to the Membership

Commissioning a public poll serves a two-fold purpose: To gauge the attitude of Canadians toward the RCMP and to gather political information that would assist us in our discussions with federal politicians.

The latest poll was not simply a poll on whether or not the RCMP should be unionized. In fact, only one out of ten questions dealt with that topic. The rest probed Canadians' attitudes about the RCMP and their awareness of the services provided by the Force and all at a nominal cost to members of .56 cents per member, or 5.6 cents per question.

The poll tested several assumptions and demonstrated firstly, that the vast majority of Canadians had a positive impression of the RCMP and viewed it as unique compared to other police forces in Canada.

Other findings included, but were not limited to: 74.4% knew that the RCMP provides all levels of policing in many areas of the country; 78.5% were aware that the RCMP protects the Parliament, the Prime Minister and foreign dignitaries; 80.4% understood that the Force does international cross-border policing; and 62.4% knew that Mounties serve as international peacekeepers. All matters important to us and to our political masters.

This was not the first public poll conducted by the Legal Fund. A few years ago, we polled Canadians about their views on compensation for members of the RCMP. The findings helped members get decent wage increases whether you were a member of the Legal Fund or not. Last year, following the Government announcement of a pay roll back, we again polled the public and their overwhelming support coupled with the need to make changes in the administration of the Force, assisted in members obtaining heretofore unobtainable pay benefits. The information obtained assisted the Legal Fund in preparing a case against the Government for the Pay Roll Back breach of contract. This issue will be the subject of a Judicial Review by the Federal Court on November 3, 2010.

Contrary to the opinions of a very small number of members, the Legal Fund has **not** been actively opposing efforts to bring members the choice of independent representation. In fact, the opposite is true.

The Legal Fund has intervened in a matter known as the Fraser Case in support of choice. Our intervention served our members for the purpose of ensuring the court was aware of the mandate of the RCMP Staff Relations Program; the existence of the Mounted Police Members' Legal Fund; its importance to the membership and the relationship of the SRRs to the Legal Fund, which was not made clear in a related court action by the Mounted Police Association of Ontario and the British Columbia Mounted Police Professional Association. For further information in this regard, we invite you all to go to our web site at www.mplegalfund.com

(<http://www.mplegalfund.com/>) and read the two sections under LINKS that relate to this issue
- The affidavit of Murray Brown and the presentation by Brad Elberg.

In the spirit of unbiased reporting, in this same area you will see that we also provided all members with the Ontario Superior Court of Justice decision that has brought us to this point in the history of RCMP Staff Relations.

SRRs have consistently put forth the position that it is the membership of the Force who will determine what type of representation they wish to have and they, the SRRs, will support the memberships' wishes. Seventy-two percent (72%) of the RCMP membership have already indicated they wish a Staff Relations Program similar to the one they currently have, with some changes, and all agree that collective bargaining is one of those desirable changes.

Given the number of media issues that the RCMP has faced over the past year, it was important to find out where we stand with Canadians – the people we serve and protect. We have learned from previous files and experiences with Government and various agencies that gauging the opinions of the public, as mentioned at the beginning of this note, is very important. Polling them was an appropriate use of the Legal Fund.