

## **Do the right thing Ontario, make a move now to fight ID Theft**

TORONTO – Ontario Information and Privacy Commissioner Ann Cavoukian today called on the Ontario Government to show leadership in the battle against identity theft rather than relying exclusively on the federal government to bring in much-needed legislation.

The Commissioner was reacting to comments made on Monday by Government Services Minister Gerry Phillips, who called on Ottawa to force Canadian banks and retailers to notify customers when their credit or debit card information has been compromised.

“I greatly respect Minister Phillips, but in my view, he is ill-advised here,” said the Commissioner. “I have been writing to the Minister for the past three years, as well as to the Premier, to bring in made-in-Ontario legislation that would address breach notification, as well other crucial privacy issues.”

“Victims of identity theft need to be notified as soon as possible in order to take whatever steps may be necessary to protect themselves, not months later. Learning about being the victim of a breach only when you get your credit card statement is not the way to do it – that’s far too late.”

Three of Canada's four largest provinces (B.C., Alberta and Quebec) already have private-sector privacy legislation. Ontario is the only one that does not. “I have been emphasizing that breach notification must be included as a basic principle of such Ontario legislation,” said the Commissioner.

“Without specific legislation, I have taken what limited steps I can. In December, I released a Breach Notification Assessment Tool (available at [www.ipc.on.ca](http://www.ipc.on.ca)) which we jointly produced with my counterpart in British Columbia. It provides hands-on advice to assist organizations in making key decisions regarding notification after a privacy breach occurs.”

“Instead of pointing to Ottawa, Ontario should be taking responsibility for bringing in its own legislation (like the three provinces cited), that will address Ontario's privacy needs, including a key provision to require breach notification.”

*Media contact:*

Bob Spence  
Communications Co-ordinator  
Office of the Information and Privacy Commissioner/Ontario,  
Phone: 416-326-3939  
Cell: 416-873-9746  
[bob.spence@ipc.on.ca](mailto:bob.spence@ipc.on.ca)