
Saskatoon Criminal Defence Lawyers Association

306 Ontario Ave, Main Floor,
Saskatoon, SK S7K 2H5

**NEWS
RELEASE****FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE****Contact: Andrew Mason****Phone: (306) 343-4831****FAX: (306) 244-2420**

**SASKATOON CRIMINAL DEFENCE LAWYERS ASSOCIATION
CALLS FOR REVIEW OF “CARDING” PRACTICES BY POLICE - ENDORSES
SUBMISSION PRESENTED TO THE SASKATOON POLICE COMMISSION**

Saskatoon, SK, May 2, 2016 -- The Saskatoon Criminal Defence Lawyers Association (“SCDLA”) has formally endorsed the written submission presented by Professor Glen Luther of the College of Law, University of Saskatchewan to the Saskatoon Board of Police Commissioners last week, opposing the Saskatoon Police Service’s practice of “carding”.

Andrew Mason, President of the SCDLA, said: “We are a society governed by the rule of law. Our law does not permit police officers to detain people for identification and questioning unless they are making an arrest or are engaged in an investigation of an offence.”

“In one incident reported to us by a member, a 16 year-old skateboarder was stopped in the afternoon for more than half an hour so that police could do various checks. He was then allowed to leave. This is not acceptable. The courts cannot control this aspect of police behaviour because such matters rarely, if ever, come before the courts.”

“Our association supports community policing initiatives. It is important for our police officers to freely interact with members of the community. But carding is an inherently coercive practice. Carding detainees do not believe that they are free to leave. While we do not dispute Chief Weighill’s assertion that the SPS has good intentions and officers do not deliberately target individuals based on race, sex, or age, there is evidence that such practices impact certain demographic groups more than others - and the effect is harmful. It creates distrust and fear among the people, particularly aboriginal youth, who are subjected to this practice.”

About the SCDLA

The SCDLA was established in 1979. Its members are criminal defence practitioners in the Saskatoon area. Our members include Legal Aid lawyers as well as private defence counsel and law students.

The SCDLA serves as a forum for its members to discuss developments in criminal law and to share experiences and knowledge in relation to criminal law matters.

The goals of the SCDLA are to develop and maintain a strong criminal defence bar, to defend individuals' rights vis-à-vis the state. The SCDLA is committed to advancing reasoned positions with the Government, the Law Society, the Judiciary and other organizations to protect the rights of persons who come in contact with the police and justice system.

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Andrew Mason may be contacted at: (306) 343-4831 or by fax at: (306) 244-2420
or email: a.mason@spmlaw.ca