

Spin Alert: BC NDP Scheming with Public Funds? Not quite.

by kevin harding - Tuesday, March 12, 2013

<http://politicsrespun.org/2013/03/spin-alert-bc-ndp-scheming-with-public-funds-not-quite/>

Spin alert! So, BC political news is all a-twitter this morning with rumours that the BC NDP has been scheming around with legislative funds, to the tune of \$200k a year. Particularly shocking after the Liberals have been in so much trouble for something similar, no?

Here's iPolitic's write-through of this supposed scandal:

Leaked portions of a draft report from auditor general John Doyle said by March 2009 the NDP amassed \$260,000 from monthly constituency office payments and most of the money was used to fund partisan activities.

[\(Paywall link\)](#)

What's the truth?

Well, the truth lies in the fact that that the report mentions a "draft report." Ask yourself this question: if it's a "draft report," did this problem arise in the Auditor General's full and final report? Would you want to find out before publishing such a story?

Well, as to the first question, the answer is **no, it didn't**. As to the second question, it seems none of the media reporting this bothered to ask themselves the simple fact-checking story.

Blogger Alex G. Tsakumis wrote about this story some time ago. According to Alex, the NDP did indeed use legislative funds for caucus purposes - *exactly as the Comptroller of the Legislature had told them they could*. (Again, an [aside](#). The Legislature provides funds for political party caucuses. Whether we like it or not, it is, at present, perfectly proper.)

[Tsakumis reports that the Auditor General reviewed the information from the NDP and removed this complaint from the full and final report, as there wasn't, in the end, a problem.](#)

Tsakumis reports that this "leak" was being shopped to him weeks ago, and he alleges it was shopped by the BC Liberals.

[Vancouver Sun columnist Vaughan Palmer wrote about the story in January. He explained more:](#)

An early version of Doyle's report appeared to suggest that those moves could amount to outright fraud. New Democrats John Horgan and Shane Simpson protested directly to Doyle that there was nothing criminal about an admittedly debatable practice.

Doyle then moved the critique to another part of his report, eliminating any implication that the New Democrats were guilty of fraud.

[...]

The auditor general routinely circulates preliminary drafts of his reports to affected agencies and he routinely makes revisions in response to the feedback from the government end.

Today, iPolitics and CBC are running with the story. Spin successful? Well, only to people whose bullshit meter wasn't thrown by the term "***draft report.***"

Seriously, iPolitics. If you read "draft," ask for "final."

Update: CKNW is effectively frothing at the mouth this morning, breathlessly reporting the AG's draft report as a "secret report." Journalistic integrity takes a hit here. Draft \neq secret, no matter how you look at it.