

**Selwyn Pieters Response to Senator Vern White comments
On CTV'S Question Period, March 19, 2017**

As it relates to Senator Meredith's conduct with Ms. M., the Senate Ethics Officer investigated and in her report found that he has violated various provisions of the *Ethics and Conflict of Interest Code for Senators*. Senator Meredith last week apologized, in a wide ranging Canadian Press interview, for his moral failings and poor judgement to his family, "Ms. M", fellow Senators and the public. He then asked for forgiveness and reconciliation.

As a local and international human rights lawyer I am sensitive to sexual exploitation and to patriarchy and understand that there would be vulnerability and a power imbalance when a 16 year old (girl or boy) is in a sexual relationship with a middle aged important person be it a Senator, Judge, Doctor or businessperson. What is important here is that Senator Meredith's conduct, short of a resignation, has to be adjudicated by his peers in the Senate. It is they that must determine what the just sanction to be impose in this case having regard to any mitigating circumstance, personal circumstance, the public's interest and general deterrence.

In terms of the criminal investigation, as a former Chief of Police, of the Ottawa Police Service, Senator Vern White would be in the best position to know the competence or the lack thereof of its sexual assault squad investigators. I would note though that when the matter was referred to the Ottawa Police Service in 2015, it was the expectation of Senator Don Meredith, his family and the public that a thorough and fair investigation would be carried out by the police. That investigation concluded and no criminal charges were laid. In cases such as these investigators has access to in-house legal advisors and Crown Law prosecutors. If there was any reasonable grounds to lay charges under section 153 of the *Criminal Code* or any other provisions, such charges would have been laid.