

TI Canada Integrity Award 2022

For over 15 years, David Hutton has been a tireless champion, advocate and supporter of Canadian whistleblowers and their efforts to promote accountability and transparency in Canada. He has also long been the recognizable leader of efforts to bring about legislative and policy changes in the field of Canadian whistleblower laws as a means of safeguarding the public interest. He has helped and supported hundreds of Canadian whistleblowers and has in these ways been extremely influential in promoting the value of whistleblowers to prevent corruption and uphold transparency and integrity in our governments and our society.

David Hutton

David is Senior Fellow of the Centre for Free Expression Whistleblowing Initiatives (“CFE WI”) at Toronto Metropolitan (Ryerson) University, and he has been an advocate for whistleblower protection since 2005.

After helping a friend who became a whistleblower, he worked with the Federal Accountability Initiative for Reform (“FAIR”), a charity devoted to whistleblower protection, for almost a decade 2005 to 2014 and served as Chair of the Board and Executive Director for six years. During this time, he operated a free confidential help line and was contacted by more than 400 whistleblowers, who he significantly aided to navigate the dangerous waters they found themselves in as a result.

David was also a leader of the group which pointed out the flaws in the Public Servants Disclosure Protection Act (“PSDPA”) before it was enacted, but this fell on deaf ears. He undertook many important activities during this period and sat on the federal government’s Public Service Integrity Commission Advisory Committee from 2010 to 2012. Sadly, his continued efforts to publicly represent the experience and views of whistleblowers and highlight the truth about how they were being treated by the organization brought this to an end

FAIR was one of the original founding members of WIN, the Whistleblowing International Network, a charity that connects and supports whistleblowing NGOs around the world. David serves as a Trustee and is one of the founders of the (WIN) and has worked with its members around the globe. He was also responsible for initiating a process that led to the Canadian Standards Association’s development of a guideline for the implementation of whistleblowing systems, published by CSA in 2016. David worked with the CSA to bring this project to life and recruit fellow members. His voice on the group carried significant weight and he has much to be proud of in this endeavour. He was instrumental in bringing this policy document that has set a Canadian standard to fruition.

David has spoken and written extensively about whistleblowing, published in-depth analyses of Canadian whistleblowing laws and their implementation, and created original guidance material for whistleblowers.

Since joining the CFE WI, David had led a number of key initiatives.

- He has been for many years Canada’s best-known source of whistleblower related information and media go to person in Canada.
- David spoke on the CFE WI’s first whistleblower awareness session in 2017, a two-hour panel discussion at Ryerson University, moderated by Paul Kennedy which became a CBC Ideas program entitled “Don’t shoot the messenger: The value of whistleblowing”.

- David worked tirelessly with the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Government Operations and Estimates when the review of the PSDPA finally came up five years late. David worked to help bring the world's top whistleblower experts to testify and dramatically impacted the outcome - <https://www.ourcommons.ca/Committees/en/OGGO/StudyActivity?studyActivityId=9339754>
- The report that the committee eventually produced, "Strengthening the Protections of the PSDPA", was unanimously accepted by the committee, but sadly its forward thinking and proactive ideas have still not been acted upon. David's efforts behind the scenes in this regard remain unrecognized but was of critical importance.
- In March 2021, the Government Accountability Project (GAP) and the International Bar Association (IBA) published a joint report, the result of a study of national whistleblower laws in 37 countries based on GAP's 20 International Best Practices for Whistleblower Policies. The highest scores achieved were 16 out of 20, awarded to the European Union, Australia, and the USA. Canada was awarded the lowest score (1 out of 20), alongside Lebanon and Norway. <https://www.ibanet.org/article/EE76121D-1282-4A2E-946C-E2E059DD63DA> David's knowledge and input were an important foundation of the Canadian element of the study.
- David has led and worked on many other CFE WI projects including an investigation into the impact of whistleblowers on the Phoenix government payroll program scandal and a number of successful media examinations of whistleblowing issues in Canada including the CBC Marketplace, the Huffington Post series and the recent CTV W5 episode on whistleblowers. He has worked with many of the most important Canadian whistleblowers of our time and was also an important member of the team behind the CFE WI's Peter Bryce Prize.
- David continues to work with whistleblowers who contact the CFE WI for help and support and is currently training new recruits to work on the assessment of whistleblower cases.
- David continues to be on the frontlines of the effort to bring change to our outdated and failed whistleblower laws at both the federal and provincial levels. He has appeared before the Alberta parliamentary committee reviewing that province's whistleblower law and also addressed the Ontario's Long-Term Care COVID 19 Commission. (November 19, 2020 <https://wayback.archive-it.org/17275/20210810150037/http://www.ltccommission-commissionsld.ca/cm/index.html>)
- His work on reviewing the proposed changes to the British Columbia whistleblower law and lobbying of the Ombudsperson led to the identification of a serious flaw in the legislation. Thanks to his intervention, the launch was delayed for six months so that the problem could be fixed.
- David was also one of the co-developers of the CFE WI's tool for the assessment of whistleblower laws and is currently assisting in the work of applying it to each provincial law. The results of this important study will be published starting in September of this year. (<https://cfe.ryerson.ca/sites/default/files/Evaluation%20Criteria%20for%20Whistleblowing%20Protection.pdf>)

David is also a published author and former management consultant, recognized as an expert in management systems and organizational change. Earlier in his career, David served as a senior executive in industry, led a successful consulting practice serving an international clientele for 20 years, and wrote two authoritative books on quality management that have been translated, published and distributed on four continents. David has dedicated the best of his retirement years and untold hours of work to these efforts and I feel that he epitomizes that which this award seeks to recognize.