2025-76: Norton v Niagara This Week

August 13, 2026

The National NewsMedia Council (NNC) mediated and found that corrective action was taken to address a complaint about accuracy in a November 19, 2025 news article published by Niagara This Week.

The article reported that a city councillor filed a human rights complaint against an independent news website, alleging she was a victim of online threats and harassment. The article reported that the firm representing the news site was funded by the Calgary-based legal advocacy group Justice Centre for Constitutional Freedoms (JCCF).

Deryk Norton filed a complaint with the NNC alleging that the following statement was inaccurate: “A check with CharityData.ca (a free online portal that provides data on Canadian registered charities from Canada Revenue Agency’s public database) for 2023, the most recent available year for data, showed the bulk of JCCF donations come from Christian groups and organizations.”

The complainant noted that the vast majority of the JCCF's revenue for the year appears to come from individuals to whom tax receipts were issued, rather than from organizations. For this reason, the complainant contested the use of the word “bulk” and questioned why religious affiliation was mentioned.

The news organization responded by agreeing with the complainant that it was not possible to determine the religious affiliation of individuals who received tax receipts. The news organization noted, however, that it was possible to determine whether or not most of the groups listed as donors on CharityData.ca had a religious affiliation.

The news organizations stated that the majority of the donors publicly listed were religiously affiliated, including one organization which contributed $100,000.

The complainant responded by noting that CharityData.ca shows that, in 2023, JCCF had a total revenue of $5,831,578 (line 4700) with $4,396,260 (line 4500) of this revenue being in the form of donations for which tax receipts were issued. The complainant noted that since tax receipts can only be issued to individuals, this means that the amount of $4,396,260 came from

individuals, not from groups or organizations. The complainant reiterated the point that the “bulk of donations” to the organization, therefore, appeared to come from individuals.

The NNC asked the news organization for further clarification about whether the statement was specifically referring to donor organizations or total donations received.

The news organization acknowledged that while the original statement was intended to refer to the published list of donors, not individual donations, the wording could have been clearer.

The news organization decided to update the article with a statement noting, “A check with CharityData.ca (a free online portal that provides data on Canadian registered charities from Canada Revenue Agency’s public database) for 2023, the most recent available year for data, showed significant number of JCCF donations come from Christian groups and organizations."

The article also included an editor’s note at the end of the article alerting readers to the change.

In reviewing the matter, the NNC considered standards surrounding accuracy and issuing corrections. When errors occur or when information needs clarification, best practice is to update articles in a clear and consistent manner, alerting readers to any changes.

The NNC reviewed the statement in question and information cited from CharityData.ca. The website, CharityData.ca, shows a range of information for charities registered in Canada, including total revenue, fundraising information, and the organizations that have donated, based on data from the Canadian Revenue Agency.

The NNC agreed with the complainant that the original statement did not accurately reflect the information cited. Specifically, the statement did not clearly distinguish between total donations received by the charity and donations made to the charity by groups or organizations.

The NNC understands that the news organization may have intended to refer to the list of published donors, rather than individual donations. However, the original statement did not make that distinction clear for readers, and therefore read as attributing the majority of the organization’s donations to religiously affiliated groups.

While a number of donors may be religiously affiliated, the NNC agrees with the complainant that the information cited does not clearly show that Christian organizations account for the majority of total donations received by the charity that year.

That said, in reviewing the information published by CharityData.ca, the NNC observed that a number of listed donors appear to be religiously affiliated, many of them associated with

Christian organizations. For this reason, the NNC supports the news organization's actions to change the wording of the statement from "the bulk of" to "significant number" of donations.

While the updated statement could be clearer in conveying to readers that it is only referring to donors listed, rather than all donations, the updated statement is a more accurate reflection of the published donor list.

Further, the inclusion of an editor's note alerting readers to any changes in the article, including the original wording, adheres to best practices when updating articles with a clarification or correction.

Regarding the complainant's concern that the statement unfairly highlights Christian organizations, rather than other religious or secular organizations, the NNC observed that the statement is simply pointing to the significant number of Christian-affiliated organizations included on the donor list, rather than stating that the donors are exclusively Christian.

The NNC would note that the focus of the article is not a deep dive into the funding of the particular charitable organization, but rather a report on the human rights complaint lodged by a city councillor against a news site. The information about the charity is provided as additional context on the organization representing the respondents to the human rights complaint.

That said, the NNC supports the clear attribution of the donor information, in the original and updated statements, to the charity portal CharityData.ca for readers to learn more about the funding of the specific charity.

For these reasons, the NNC found the complaint resolved due to corrective action.