

Parliamentary Pro-Life Caucus



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Pro-Life Free Speech Suppressed in Canada

(Ottawa) - "In the last 12 months we have seen an alarming increase in the number of cases where pro-life groups have had their free speech suppressed," said Rod Bruinooge, Chair of the Parliamentary Pro Life Caucus (PPLC). "What do opponents of the pro-life viewpoint fear?"

Each year, the multi-party Pro-life Caucus holds a press conference in conjunction with the National March for Life.* This year's March marks the 40th anniversary of the 1969 Omnibus Bill which decriminalized abortion in Canada.

The pro-life caucus will use this opportunity to highlight a disturbing trend of intolerance towards the pro-life point of view. "From student unions and campuses, to advertising regulators, pro-life free speech is being treated by some as unworthy of protection," Bruinooge said.

One particular case involved LifeCanada, after they coordinated a national billboard campaign with the message "Nine Months, the length of time abortion is allowed in Canada." The Advertising Standards Canada body ruled that the advertising was "deceptive," and LifeCanada was banned from using that ad among all of the major advertisers that this body serves. "It is unfortunate that we are unable to communicate the truth to Canadians that abortion is permitted in all 9 months of pregnancy," said Gudrun Schultz, executive director of LifeCanada.

On campuses around Canada there are a number of cases where pro-life clubs have been denied club status and where pro-life students have been shouted down, prevented from speaking, been the subject of "thought police" inquiries, or have been arrested for trespassing.

"Polls consistently show that a majority of Canadians do not support Canada's unrestricted taxpayer funded abortion regime," Bruinooge said. "And although there are close to 100,000

** The National March for Life is an annual event organized by Campaign Life Coalition and draws thousands of people to Ottawa from across the country every year in support of the lives of preborn children, the health of women, and the strength of families.*

abortions every year in Canada, we actually know very little about the practice. For example, we don't know the gestational age of the unborn child in over 60% of the cases because abortion providers aren't required to report this information. Nor are they required to report health complications or the reasons women obtain abortions. Stifling free speech allows the whole secrecy surrounding the practice of abortion to thrive.”

Bruinooge continued, “Every woman has a right to be fully informed about the potential physical and psychological health risks of abortion. The trend to clamp down on free speech on this issue is a threat to all women who seek to be adequately informed.”

Bruinooge concluded, “Student unions attempt to censor pro-lifers; school campuses attempt to censor pro-lifers; advertising bodies attempt to censor pro-lifers; but one place where freedom and democracy are still valued is the Parliament of Canada. It doesn't surprise me that our opponents attempt to suppress pro-life messages, because the truth is powerful.”

The PPLC press conference will be held Thursday, May 14, at 11:00 a.m. in the Charles Lynch Press Theatre (room 130-S Centre Block).

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