



Brian Storseth

Member of Parliament
Westlock – St. Paul



Dear Friend,

I am writing you today to discuss my private members bill, Bill C-304 *An Act to Amend the Canadian Human Rights Act: Protecting Freedom*.

Freedom of speech is the bedrock upon which all other freedoms are built. Without freedom of speech, freedom of religion and freedom of assembly hold no true value. For over 40 years, Canadians have been stripped of this fundamental freedom by an overzealous bureaucracy imposing a vague and loosely written law, Section 13 of the Canadian Human Rights Act (CHRA).

The Canadian Human Rights Act was passed in 1977 under the Trudeau government and Section 13 was included as a result of recorded hate messages being dispersed in Toronto. There has been a long history of dissatisfaction with this Section of the CHRA as it directly conflicts with Section 2(b) of the Charter of Human Rights and Freedoms, which guarantees individuals the fundamental right to freedom of expression.

While Section 13 may have been implemented with well meaning intentions, in an effort to combat discrimination and hate speech, its implications reach much further, chilling free speech and stifling the growth and development of our society.

Under Section 13, truth and intent are not a defense. Defendants are denied the right to due process, to a speedy trial, to face their accuser, and the right to an attorney. These are not the characteristics of an open and democratic society that promotes equality and fairness.

Protecting Freedom will repeal Section 13 of the CHRA in an effort to reconstruct freedom of speech as a cornerstone of our great country. To achieve this, hate speech allegations must be addressed through an open, transparent and democratic process, through the Criminal Code of Canada. However, this is just one step of many that need to be taken to ensure that an appropriate balance is sought when determining justifiable limitations on freedom of speech in Canada. Here in Alberta, Section 3 of the Alberta Human Rights Act (AHRA) harbours the same deficiencies and corrupted structure as that of Section 13 of the CHRA.

Please sign this petition and send it back to me so we can encourage Premier Alison Redford to follow through on her election promise and repeal Section 3 of the AHRA.

Hate speech is a very serious issue and it must be dealt with appropriately, with police investigations and appropriate penalties. True hate speech, speech intended to incite hatred and subject persons of an identifiable group to harm, deserves more than a slap on the wrist and should be carefully examined under the Criminal Code, which already contains provisions and where it is a more appropriate fit.

Thank you for your time,

Brian Storseth, MP
Westlock – St. Paul

