



Catholic Civil Rights League

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Monthly highlights

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Parents' primary role in civil liberties asserted

The Catholic Civil Rights League has responded to issues raised by the recent adoption of an equity policy at the Burnaby School Board with a Declaration on the Authority of Parents and Guardians in the Education of their Children. The Burnaby policy includes some controversial elements regarding homosexuality.

"The declaration is not specific to the Catholic Church or Catholic teaching," said Sean Murphy, a League director for British Columbia. "It cites numerous international conventions and declarations that have been signed by many nations, including Canada.

"It is now time to recognize that parents are the first line of defense against the abuse of state power in education, and the first protectors, not just of children, but of civil liberties," said Mr. Murphy.

The statement is found in a letter to the BC Civil Liberties Association (BCCLA) concerning a policy recently adopted by the school board in Burnaby, BC. The letter accompanies the release of the Declaration on the Authority of parents and Guardians in the Education of their children, a non-denominational statement of principles on the subject.

Rather than referring to religious teaching, the document cites numerous international declarations and covenants that Canada has signed. It affirms that "the authority of parents and guardians to direct the education of their own children must be fully respected and

accommodated by the state and by all those involved in education."

All documents mentioned in this article are available in full on our website, www.ccrl.ca.

MP's proposal to change prostitution law welcomed

The League wrote to MP Joy Smith July 15 to thank her for her plan to introduce a private member's bill that would strengthen Canada's prostitution laws. The proposal, which will be introduced this Fall, is based on the "Nordic model," adopted in several Scandinavian countries, in which customers and profiteers can be charged, but the prostitutes themselves rarely are.

In thanking Mrs. Smith for her initiative in this matter, we noted that Parliament is the place for changes to social policy, not the courts. "We are part of (the current court case) not because we think our current laws are perfect, but rather because we think they offer at least some protection for those coerced and exploited into being part of the business, and because we think any fundamental social change should be made in Parliament, not in the courts. Proposals such as yours are an important means of getting such social policy matters back into Parliament, and we commend you for it. Be assured that all our members will be following the progress of this bill closely."

Doctors cannot arbitrarily overrule family in end-of-life care, court rules

TORONTO, July 20, 2011 (CCRL) - The Ontario Court of Appeal ruled unanimously June 29 that doctors cannot unilaterally cease treatment over the objections of family members, but rather that it is necessary for them to refer their concerns to the Ontario Consent and Capacity Board, which has the jurisdiction to de-

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termine the issue of consent and to address any challenges to that consent made by a doctor. The case relates to a medical conflict over the fate of Hasan Rasouli, who has been in a coma at Sunnybrook Hospital and whose doctors argued they did not need the family's consent to withdraw life-sustaining treatment. The family believed such cessation would violate his religious beliefs. Ontario's appeal court said the family's wishes could not be overruled by the doctors.

The three justices writing for the Appeal Court unanimously upheld a Superior Court decision saying that withdrawing life-support constituted medical treatment and required the consent of the patient's family. When the family refuses consent, doctors must appeal to the Ontario Consent and Capacity Board for a decision, said the judges.

The Consent and Capacity Board includes lawyers, psychiatrists, and citizens in Ontario who are appointed by the province to resolve disputes such as in the Rasouli case between doctors and the family.

The Euthanasia Prevention Coalition, of which the League is a member, says the case will set a precedent for the resolution of similar conflicts across Canada, upholding the importance of the wishes of the patient and the family. This decision has profound implications for patients in terms of feeling safe and secure in accessing medical services near the end of life, says Euthanasia Prevention Coalition Executive Director Alex Schadenberg, whose organization intervened in the Appeal.

MEDIA WATCH

Public hearing on CBC postponed

OTTAWA-GATINEAU, July 8, 2011 - The Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission (CRTC) has announced that it is postponing until June 4, 2012 the licence renewal hearing for the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation/Société Radio-Canada (CBC/SRC). All public input received through CBC and CRTC channels will become part of the record for the renewal process in 2012. Many League members have already filed their comments, and the CRTC continues to make the online form for this purpose available: CRTC consultation on CBC license renewal can be found online at: <http://www.cbc-consultation.ca/welcome/>

This is an opportunity to express your views about the

CBC's operations, including its portrayals of religion in news, documentaries and entertainment.

Let the League know: Articles, cartoons and advertising that you believe have anti-Catholic content should be sent to ccrl@ccrl.ca to help us respond in a timely way.

Canadian Observer: New magazine on political and social trends

The Canadian Centre for Policy Studies has launched the quarterly magazine Canadian Observer, designed to provide a forum for the development and dissemination of conservative ideas in the areas of culture, politics and public affairs. The first edition can be downloaded free from www.canadianobservermag.ca; future editions are by subscription. The League is contributing an article to the Fall edition about the current court challenge to Canada's prostitution laws.

League AGM Oct. 13

The League's annual general meeting takes place Oct. 13 in Toronto, beginning with the 5:15 Mass at St. Michael's Cathedral with the business portion and guest speaker immediately following at Bond Place Hotel. A cold buffet will be served. Guest speaker will be Daniel Santoro, lawyer for pro-life protester Linda Gibbons, who will discuss the civil rights implications of Linda's important free speech and freedom of religion case.

Chapter contacts

Antigonish chapter annual barbecue is August 14. Contact Greg MacDougall, chapter president danielgregmacedougall@hotmail.com, for details. From September to June the chapter meets the first Tuesday of each month.

For upcoming meetings of our Windsor-Essex chapter contact Bob Baksi at robert@baksi.com.

To inquire about other chapters, or to form a chapter in your area, contact us at the address below.

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