



Catholic Civil Rights League

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Monthly highlights

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B.C. court ruling on assisted suicide to be appealed

OTTAWA, July 16, 2012 – The Catholic Civil Rights League is pleased to learn that the federal government will appeal last month's BC Supreme Court ruling in *Carter v Canada* that struck down Canada's ban on assisted suicide ([League press releases](#), June 15). The League and many other organizations had urged the government to appeal.

In a statement July 13, federal Justice Minister Rob Nicholson said the government intends to seek a stay on all aspects of the ruling, including the exemption for plaintiff Gloria Taylor, while it goes to the BC Court of Appeal. Mrs. Taylor, a BC resident, suffers from Lou Gehrig's disease and said she wants a doctor's help to die before the illness progresses to the point that she can no longer care for herself.

"The government is of the view that the Criminal Code provisions that prohibit medical professionals, or anyone else, from counseling or providing assistance in a suicide, are constitutionally valid," said Mr. Nicholson. "The government also objects to the lower court's decision to grant a 'constitutional exemption' resembling a regulatory framework for assisted suicide."

At the time of the decision, the League noted that the court "has ignored the existing precedent of the Supreme Court of Canada, from the *Rodriguez* decision from 1993. The Court's ruling has trivialized the serious concerns about the impact of the liberalization of assisted suicide laws, and the impact on those with severe or costly disabilities to make use of that option. There is little comfort for doctors who may be asked to participate in such requests contrary to their conscientious rights."

When Parliament last voted on this issue (on Bill C-384, in 2010), the proposal for liberalization was defeated by a vote of 228 to 59 due to concerns about the potential

for abuse of seniors and people with disabilities, the lack of an effective national suicide prevention strategy, and the lack of access to good palliative care in Canada. Little if anything has changed since that vote, so it is of particular concern that a court overruled what Parliament so recently voted.

It is also unfortunate that the ruling implied that suicide is a constitutional right when Parliament has identified it as a national tragedy. Bill 300, for example, which aims to coordinate and strengthen the work of suicide prevention agencies, reached the Senate just days before the decision in *Carter* was delivered.

Motion 312 update

The second hour of debate on Motion 312, which seeks to establish a parliamentary committee to review the Criminal Code section stating that human life begins at birth, was delayed at the request of MP Stephen Woodworth, who first proposed the motion. Mr. Woodworth made the request due to the illness of his mother, and the motion is expected to be debated in the Fall instead. In the meantime, it's important to express your support for the motion to your MP, especially during the summer when most of them are in their ridings. The League supports this effort to study and propose ways to change a law that is 400 years old. Mr. Woodworth has requested that petitions in support of the motion be returned to his office upon completion.

Tribute book being compiled

We have gathered most of the content for our book of columns and speeches that the late Tom Langan wrote as president and president emeritus of the League. If you have any writing of Tom's that you would like considered for inclusion, please mail or e-mail it to us (ccrl@ccrl.ca). If possible, Word attachments are pre-

ferred but we understand that some of Tom's material predates that format! We hope to have the collection ready for printing in the Fall.

Linda Gibbons free after acquittal

TORONTO, Ontario, July 24, 2012 - Linda Gibbons tasted freedom for the first time in over seven months last Friday morning (July 20) after a judge found her not guilty of disobeying a court order in connection with her arrest outside the Morgentaler abortion site in Toronto last December 16.

She was immediately released from custody to the greetings of supporters in a downtown Toronto courtroom as Justice William R. Wolski of the Ontario Court of Justice ruled Crown attorney Andrew Cappell had insufficiently proven Gibbons created a nuisance, as the charge had suggested. Wolski said Gibbons could not be convicted because the testimony of an attending sheriff was inadequate and no abortion staff were called to outline how Gibbons's actions allegedly impacted them.

- *LifeSite News*, July 24/12

Media Watch

Vatican sues German newsmagazine

The Vatican has filed legal charges against a German satirical magazine that published an offensive depiction of Pope Benedict XVI.

The July issue of *Titanic* magazine featured a photo of the Pontiff, altered to include what appeared to be a urine stain on the front of his cassock. The photo accompanied a feature story on the "Vatileaks" scandal, and the headline read: "The leak has been found."

Archbishop Angelo Becciu, the Vatican's deputy Secretary of State, gave instructions to a German lawyer to take "the necessary legal steps against this publication." A court in Hamburg, responding to the Vatican complaint, ordered *Titanic* to stop marketing copies of the July issue.

- *CW News* July 11/12

Let the League know: If you see articles, notices of TV programs or other media content that you believe have serious anti-Catholic content, please con-

tact us at ccrl@ccrl.ca to help us evaluate and respond in a timely way.

Mark your calendars:

League annual meeting: Wednesday October 24 in Toronto, beginning with Mass in memory of deceased League members and supporters at 5:30 pm at St. Michael's Cathedral. Business meeting to follow at St. Michael's Choir School.

National Conference of the Fellowship of Catholic Scholars, Halifax, October 19-21. The League will be presenting a paper about current challenges to parental authority in education in Canada. For more information about the conference, contact Patrick Redmond at pmredmond@sympatico.ca or visit www.catholicscholarscanada.com.

National Pro-Life Conference, October 25-27, 2012 in Toronto. Speakers include MPs Stephen Woodworth and Brad Trost, and Margaret Somerville, director of the McGill Centre for Medicine, Ethics and Law. For registration and further information: 1-866-588-2684 or e-mail aflo@mgl.ca

Chapter contacts

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

Antigonish chapter: Contact Don Maclellan, chapter president, at maclellan_donald@yahoo.ca for details. From September to June the chapter meets the first Tuesday of each month.

St. Catharines Chapter: Contact Justin O'Donnell at justinodonnell@cogeco.ca.

The League is pleased to address parish and school groups in regions where we have a director available. Contact Joanne at 416-466-8244 or ccrl@ccrl.ca for more information.

We have updated information and membership brochures available for parish events and literature racks. We would be happy to send you some upon request.

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