



# Catholic Civil Rights League

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## Blogger seeks end to abortion stats secrecy

OTTAWA , July 18, 2013— “In January 2012, the Ontario Liberal government amended its freedom of information law to exempt any abortion-related data from Freedom of Information (FOI) requests. As a blogger and a member of the new media, I’m taking on the government and challenging them over this undemocratic move. Taxpayers should know how their tax dollars are being spent,” explains Patricia Maloney.

By means of Bill 122, the Broader Public Sector Accountability Act, the Ontario government amended the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (FIPPA) to restrict data relating to the “provision of abortion services” from the public. There is no recorded debate in Hansard of this amendment, and it did not come to the public’s attention until after the provision came into effect and Maloney exposed it.

Maloney, the author behind the blog Run with Life, discovered the amendment when the Ministry of Health responded to an FOI request she made in March 2012. After breaking the story on her blog, the amendment caught the attention of the national media. Among others, Margaret Somerville covered it for the Calgary Herald and Barbara Kay wrote about it in the National Post.

“I’m not interested in patient or physician names, or the identification of hospitals. I respect the dual purposes of freedom of information laws; to ensure government accountability by providing information to taxpayers while ensuring the privacy of Canadian citizens. But data relating to provincial trends and rates of a publicly funded medical procedure are fair game,” elaborates Maloney. “The government has not restricted this type of generalized data for any other medical procedure.

“And without this data, how will we know if safe-sex campaigns are effective? Or the sex-education program that Premier Kathleen Wynne has promised to introduce?” Maloney asks. “Or if there is a sudden spike in

tween or teen abortions? This is an important healthcare issue. And now the public is running blind on a government expenditure previously identified as costing as much as 30 to 50 million dollars each year.”

In March 2013, the Ministry of Health denied Maloney’s FOI request. Maloney retained constitutional lawyer Albertos Polizogopoulos, and appealed the decision to the Information and Privacy Commissioner (IPC). The IPC upheld the Ministry’s decision stating that the new section to the FIPPA was clear in its exclusion of documents relating to the provision of abortion services. Maloney is now seeking a reconsideration of the IPC’s Order (by the IPC) and a Judicial Review of the Order (by the Ontario Divisional Court).

“As a blogger, Ms. Maloney benefits from the freedom of expression and freedom of the press guaranteed by the Charter of Rights and Freedoms,” explains Polizogopoulos. “The Charter protects her right to comment on matters of public interest. The allocation of taxpayer funds for a medical procedure which remains the source of much controversy is certainly a matter of public interest and the suppression of that information cannot be justified in law.”

- *The League is helping to support this case.*

### League supports joint statement opposing Quebec euthanasia bill

The League is among a number of national organizations supporting a joint statement prepared by Life Canada to oppose Bill 52, Quebec’s proposed legislation to implement euthanasia as an option in end-of-life care in some circumstances ([League press releases](#), June 12). The statement emphasizes that killing the patient has no place in a health care system, and points out that society’s most vulnerable people would be placed at risk under such a regime. It will be delivered to Quebec legisla-

tors before the next session begins in September.

“The key question that must be addressed is stark yet profound: Is killing a legitimate part of health care? Should doctors be licensed to kill their patients?” the statement asks.

“In solidarity with many doctors and others in Quebec, we emphatically answer in the negative. Our reason is that the underlying philosophy of the euthanasia movement – that life, when lacking a certain quality, is expendable - profoundly undermines the common good and leads to mortal danger for many of the most vulnerable members of society.”

Members of the League residing in Quebec are urged to contact your MLA to express concerns about this legislation.

## Media watch

### Papal remarks misinterpreted

*July 30, 2013 - Despite some misleading reporting in the media, Pope Francis' recent remarks to the press about sexual orientation were in keeping with traditional Church teaching. Here is the best report we have seen about the press conference:*

VATICAN CITY, CWN, July 29, 2013 - Pope Francis has said that he does not judge homosexuals, including homosexual priests. “If they accept the Lord and have good will, who am I to judge them?” the Pope said.

The Pope added that a homosexual orientation “is not the problem.” He called for charitable treatment of homosexuals, saying that they should not be marginalized.

The Pope’s remarks-- made during a long and candid exchange with reporters who accompanied him on his return flight to Rome after a visit to Brazil for World Youth Day—were widely interpreted by reporters as an acceptance of homosexuals in the Catholic priesthood. But in fact the Pope’s comments were addressed to different questions.

The Pope had been answering questions from reporters on two sensitive topics: the reported existence of a “gay lobby” at the Vatican, and reports that the newly appointed prelate of the Vatican bank, Msgr. Battista Ricca, had been involved in past homosexual scandals.

Regarding Msgr. Ricca, the Pope disclosed that he had conducted an investigation into charges of misconduct,

and “there was nothing.” He went on to say that it is “dangerous” to probe into the past sins of others. People can sin, repent, and accept God’s forgiveness, the Pope said. “The Lord both forgives and forgets. We don’t have the right not to forget.”

Thus the Pope did not address the issue of whether homosexuals should be ordained to the priesthood. He did not contradict the existing Vatican policy, set forth in a 2005 instruction from the Congregation for Catholic Education, stipulating that men with homosexual tendencies should not be ordained.

Nor did the Pope dismiss concerns about a "gay lobby" at the Vatican. On the contrary Pope Francis acknowledged-- as he has in the past-- that the existence of a lobby is a problem to be addressed.

-Catholic World News, July 29, 2013

## Mark your calendars

**League AGM Oct. 24:** If you live in the GTA or will be visiting in October, please join us Thursday, October 24 for our annual general meeting. We will begin with the 5:30 Mass at St. Michael’s Cathedral, to be celebrated in memory of deceased members of the League, and then proceed to a nearby hall for refreshments and our meeting. It will include the launch of a book of reflections by our beloved late co-founder and President Emeritus Tom Langan. More details to follow in our September newsletter.

## Chapter contacts

For information about our *Windsor-Essex chapter* contact Bob Baksi at [robert@baksi.com](mailto:robert@baksi.com).

*Antigonish chapter:* Contact Don Maclellan, chapter president, at [maclellan\\_donald@yahoo.ca](mailto: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](mailto:justinodonnell@cogeco.ca).

Our work is sustained exclusively by your generous donations. For your convenience, you can donate by credit card at [www.ccrl.ca](http://www.ccrl.ca), or by mail to the address below.

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