Canadians are blessed with incredible freedoms and privileges. But that does not mean that these are guaranteed or will continue without challenges. In recent years, quasi-judicial commissions and tribunals have been exploiting the authority they were entrusted with by creating new “rights” and undermining the fundamental freedoms that we easily take for granted, including freedom of speech and expression, freedom of religion and conscience, freedom of the press, and freedom of assembly and association.

The Abuses on Freedom by the HRC’s

Human rights commissions and tribunals have become the favorite tool of activists to make life difficult for any person or organization that they despise. Consider these facts:

1. The complainant receives free legal assistance from the Commission and is often reimbursed for any expenses incurred.
2. The respondent receives no financial assistance, and in almost all cases must fund their own defence.
3. Some remedial orders have involved forced statements, confessions, recantations, and “diversity training” which contravene the fundamental right to freedom of conscience.
4. The hurt feelings of the complainant alone are sufficient to warrant a remedy by the Tribunal, even with no proof of harm.
5. The Commissions have subtly created new prohibited grounds for discrimination without democratic consent.
6. The Commissions have more investigative powers than the police.
7. The Tribunal's quasi-judicial rules short-circuit many of the vital checks and balances that exist in our court systems.

Momentum is Building

For many years the victims of the commissions and tribunals were ordinary Canadians who did not have the funds or networks to respond to the complaints against them. But more recently, the commissions made the mistake of taking on two high-profile magazines – Macleans and the Western Standard. Thanks to their willingness to stand up for freedom, Canadians are now much more aware of what is going on.

1. In 2009 Parliament's Justice Committee started an inquiry into the activities of the Canadian HRC.
2. A private member's bill has been introduced to reform the federal human rights code.
3. Dozens of newspapers have written editorials calling for the reform or removal of the HRC's.
4. MP's and MLA's/MPP's from across the political spectrum are calling for reform.

Time for Action!

We need the public to add their voice so that this momentum will result in legislative changes. Until the public makes its concerns heard, our governments will refuse to take the necessary steps to reform or remove these commissions and tribunals. **You need to stand up for freedom today!**
Visit www.HumanRightsCommissions.ca for contact information for your provincial and federal representatives, sample letters, talking points, and many more resources to make it easy for you to share your concerns with the appropriate government leaders.

"Human rights commissions, as they are evolving, are an attack on our fundamental freedoms and the basic existence of a democratic society…It is in fact totalitarianism. I find this is very scary stuff."

Stephen Harper, B.C. Report Newsmagazine, January 11, 1999

“During the years when my colleagues and I were labouring to create such commissions we never imagined that they might ultimately be used against freedom of speech.”

Alan Borovoy, General Counsel of the Canadian Civil Liberties Association, and foundational father of the first Human Rights Commission in Canada

Introduction

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