



To the Members of the Committee on Law Amendments:

Last year I spoke before this committee regarding Bill 242 which created access zones around facilities which committed abortions. During my speech, I indicated that I felt the Bill set precedent that could eventually result in the denial of free speech on any divisive issue in any location. I feel that my words are prophetic. Bill 11 is nigh identical to Bill 242. It merely broadens the current access zones to include all protestors that seem unpopular to the current regime. How much further will this go? These topics are unpopular, difficult, and emotionally divisive no matter where they are discussed. The right to freedom of expression and assembly, the right to protest, is a constitutional freedom.

As I also reminded the Committee last year, it is already in the Criminal Code of Canada that harassment and other such aggressive, threatening behaviour is not allowed. It is also illegal to block public areas. If this behaviour is already criminal, what is the purpose of Bill 11? It seems it is to reduce the efficacy of protest for people who do not hold the popular opinion.

If one can hold a sign in an access zone in favour of certain measures, but not against, it is regulating a person's right to freedom of expression, not patient safety. Therefore, I find this Bill represents an egregious trespass upon the civil rights of individuals. It is not the place of the legislature to stop the people from giving their opinions when they are to be public servants.

I would advise the Committee members then to be cautious. This bill should be stopped. You were warned last year. You have been warned again today. I fear if this trend continues, someday it may be you that is muzzled by the regime.

Thank you for your consideration,

Ruth Robert