

Testimony of David Richardson on Bill 149

April 19, 2022

[REDACTED] Deep Cover [REDACTED]

Chapel Hill, North Carolina, [REDACTED]
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I am David Richardson. My in-season address is 58 Upper Blandford Road, Deep Cove. I was born in Detroit, but my direct ancestor landed at Port Royal NS in 1683.

I have testified many times in front of US State Legislatures and the US Congress. I know civility is expected and how to practice it. But when politicians adopt socially dangerous tactics and lie to their constituency civility has limits. So I will speak bluntly to Nova Scotia's newly elected Progressive Conservatives.

Scapegoating

Scapegoating has been used by tyrants from Stalin to Donald Trump. It is the most central and insidious feature of the PCs c plan.

To callously get votes, you intentionally poked a hornet's nest of anger about "elite Ontario and "rich Americans" speculators. You cultivated the minority of backward Nova Scotians who still resent the "come from away." Congratulations on your evil genius.

You then baked scapegoating into this bill's ridiculous and hypocritical design. So, you tax "the other" but exclude Nova Scotians who own 95% of unoccupied homes. Of course, if you had admitted that Nova Scotians themselves are primarily responsible for their housing dilemma and proposed to equitably tax your own voters, you would not be sitting in your paid for chair today.

You continue to scapegoat in these hearings. You sit like bumps on a log unmoved by gut wrenching stories of your neighbors, or compelling evidence of nuclear economic fallout. We are not fooled. Your silence is a planned political stunt to show angry constituents you have absolutely no sympathy for those evil "speculators" from outside the Province.

Decades of experience worldwide show that once you let the scapegoat genie out of the bottle you can't put it back in. Ask the people of Quebec. Ask Americans about January 6th and countless attacks on the many groups scapegoated by US conservatives. The same is beginning to happen in Nova Scotia.

An enthusiastic young couple from Toronto bought a modest house in the Valley to start a business and posted a Tic Toc video. Within days they had hundreds of hateful responses from

the Nova Scotian voters you cultivated. I quote one such comment: “You are exactly the people we do not want in our Province.”

Nova Scotians have vandalized cars with US plates. How long before the rocks go thru windows of unoccupied seasonal residents?

You will of course deny you intend or support these effects, just as Donald Trump stands up and says he is the least racist person in the world. But thoughtful Nova Scotia voters will pay attention to what you do, and not what you say. And what you have done is to unleash the Kraken. Unless you change course drastically you will not be able to control it.

We seasonal residents with longtime friends know that the true heart of Nova Scotians is not represented in Bill 149.

But, to the world at large this bill will represent what all Nova Scotian’s they stand for. And that means you will be seen as clones of uneducated and dangerous American Trumpsters chanting “Lets’ Make Nova Scotia provincial Again.” With a small p.

With any time remaining, I will try to cover the many falsehoods upon which your scapegoating plan is based.

- 1 “This Bill was carefully analyzed by the Progressive Conservatives” So said PC Susan Corkam in a letter to constituents. This is simply a lie. There is no analysis.
2. “There are no affordable homes in rural areas” Within 25 minutes of my Blandford home there are 173 active listings under \$350K, 150 under \$250K and many far less expensive.
- 3 “You don’t pay your fair share” We pay higher uncapped property taxes and capital gains. Ineligible for your health care, we actually subsidize your hospitals with exorbitant fees. My wife was charged \$12,000 for minimal 24 care in the ED. I have a related solution that works better than your property tax and would raise you millions. Ask me about it.
- 4 “We want you to move here full time” Another falsehood. You cannot gain permanent status if, like so many seasonal residents, you are foreign and older.
- 5 “You can rent your house” Astonishing. The PCs, led by accountant Bermuda Tim, don’t understand tax policy? If you convert a home from personal to business use (i.e. full time rental) you are hit with a 15% HST tax. No one is going to pay 15% to avoid 2%.
- 6 “Stop crying, you will make tons when you sell.” We bought when Nova Scotia was the worst investment in North America and spent thousands on rehab. We didn’t plan to sell prematurely. We are still underwater at least two hundred thousand.

7 “This measure will improve the housing stock “ Most speakers said they will not sell nor no rent full time. A few with multimillion dollar properties said they would leave Their mansions don’t add to the “affordable” housing stock-- unless this bill is really about some of you finally getting that bargain in Chester.

8 “This measure will raise revenue” Seasonal residents testified they will cut back dramatically on expenditures. Millions in charitable contributions will cease as has a potential investment in the billions. Every penny you grab will be offset by lower economic activity and associated reductions in income taxes and HST. The PCs brilliant accountants and entrepreneurs make these arguments against every tax they don’t like, but are hypocrites on the impact of this bill.

9 “Foreigners do not have the rights of Nova Scotians ” Of course not. But citizens from all democratic countries have a right to protection of property that is lawfully acquired. Will Snowbirds accept a 2% tax on their Sunbelt homes? Be careful, Ron DeSantis Florida voters hate “socialist Canadians” but love your money.