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C-10: Censorship of Canadians?

by MP KYLE SEEBACK

Much has been said about the Liberal government's Bill C-10 and for good reason. The bill would give sweeping powers to the Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission (CRTC) to regulate user-generated content uploaded to social media platforms, much the same way it regulates radio and TV content. This raises serious concerns not just for me, but for millions of Canadians.

Bill C-10 was introduced by the Liberal government last fall. Its original purpose was to level the playing field between streaming services, such as Netflix and Canadian broadcasters. Initially, the bill exempted user-generated content. Unfortunately, the Liberal government changed direction and tried to quietly limit ordinary Canadians' freedom of expression online by removing the exemption for individual users who upload videos and content to social media sites. This is not only concerning for me, but for many internet advocates, civil liberties lawyers, academics, and media outlets.

University of Ottawa law professor and the Canada Research Chair in internet and e-commerce law, Michael Geist, said that the Liberal government is now, ?the most anti-Internet government in Canadian history? (https://www.michaelgeist.ca). Mr. Geist has also said Bill C-10 is, ?a ?dangerous' attack on free speech? (CTV News, May 04, 2021). Tamir Israel, a technology lawyer at the University of Toronto said, ?losing the protection could mean podcasts uploaded to iTunes or videos uploaded to YouTube could become subject to regulation by the federal government? (Toronto Star, April 26, 2021).

Other media outlets have also expressed concerns with Bill C-10. Rachel Gilmore from Global News wrote, ?The bill, in its current state, would turn the YouTube video of a kid's soccer game, or the Instagram reel you posted of your brunch, into a ?program' that could be subject to regulation under the Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission's (CRTC) rules? (Global News, April 30, 2021). She also quotes former CRTC vice-chair and past newspaper publisher, Peter Menzies, ??It's your Facebook post. It's your tweet. It's your cat videos. It's your pictures of your children and grandchildren and that sort of stuff '? and, ??What it means is that somebody will be watching that, from the government, or a government regulator, and will be able to order it to be taken down if they find that it doesn't suit whatever purposes they have'? (Global News, April 30, 2021).

Many other media outlets have published articles raising concerns about Bill C-10. You can find web links to the articles I've cited here, as well as many others on my website at https://www.kyleseeback.ca/c10. The issues raised by the media and many experts on this subject matter are why I have very serious concerns about the implications of this proposed legislation. The actions taken by the Liberal government are unacceptable in a society that values its freedom. The last thing I want, or most Canadians is the government choosing what social media posts or videos I can view online. Protection from hate speech, defamation and obscenity already exists. Controlling content is a clear violation of our freedom of expression and a violation I won't stand for.

I've sponsored an online petition (e-3379) which calls upon the Liberal government to immediately withdraw or repeal Bill C-10 and respect Canadians' freedom of expression. You can add your name to the petition through my website.

As always, I invite you to share your thoughts with me about Bill C-10 and any concerns you may have about other pieces of legislation before Parliament. I may be reached by e-mail at kyle.seeback@parl.gc.ca or by phone at 519-941-1832 or toll free at 1-866-941-1832.