



February 26th, 2015

To: Mr. Daryl Kramp, MP, Chair, Standing Committee on Public Safety and National Security.

Freedom of expression and protection of privacy are two core values for libraries — concepts which are as inseparable as they are essential to a free democratic society. When these values are challenged or threatened, libraries cannot help but object. Canadian libraries exist and flourish to ensure that citizens have access to information without fear of persecution. By championing access to information libraries create a stronger more diverse and more prosperous society for all of us.

Bill C-51 is a threat to the core values of libraries and the democratic society which gives them life. Broadly-worded and ill-defined provisions in the criminal code against "promoting or advocating" objectionable ideas will shut down important conversations necessary for our country to move forward. Vague language that could equate civil disobedience or "threatening economic stability" with terrorist violence is a direct attack on freedom of expression in Canada. New measures that allow unprecedented information sharing between government entities, without adequate restrictions and oversight, threaten the privacy that is essential for free expression, discussion and debate to take place.

The British Columbia Library Association asserts that the government of Canada must respect people's ability to create and share information without fear of persecution. Adequate privacy is required for both the free creation of information and free access to it. We all benefit from living in a society where the open exchange of ideas occurs; open discussion allows for debate and education and ensures that polarizing viewpoints are not driven in to the shadows where they can exist unchecked and unchallenged.

On behalf of the British Columbia Library Association, I urge you to schedule extensive hearings on Bill C-51 to ensure that all relevant knowledge, opinions, and perspectives are given an opportunity to be considered and heard. What we value — as libraries and as citizens of a democracy we cherish — depends on the government of Canada providing the time and willingness to listen to the concerns of all citizens.

Sincerely,

Heather Buzzell
President
British Columbia Library Association

Cc: The Right Hon. Stephen HARPER, P.C., B.A., M.A.
The Hon. Thomas J. MULCAIR, P.C., B.C.L, LL.B.
Justin TRUDEAU, B.A., B.Ed.
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