

November 20, 2018

The Honourable Doug Ford  
Premier of Ontario  
Via E-mail at [doug.ford@pc.ola.org](mailto:doug.ford@pc.ola.org)

The Honourable Laurie Scott, MPP  
Minister of Labour  
Via E-mail at [laurie.scott@pc.ola.org](mailto:laurie.scott@pc.ola.org)

Re: Ontario PC Party Resolution R4

Dear Mr. Ford and Ms. Scott,

We are writing following news of the Ontario PC Party's passing of Policy Resolution R4, in which a member of your party described 'gender identity theory' as "a highly controversial, unscientific, 'liberal ideology'" and directed that it be removed from Ontario's schools and curriculum.

While the resolution is not yet binding and your government is now attempting to reverse course, its passage amongst your caucus, especially the weekend before Trans Awareness Week, raises grave concern for the future of human rights in this Province.

Human rights protections have been deeply enshrined in this Province for over five decades. Yet, like the finest points of Canada's legal framework, they continue to grow and evolve over time to keep pace with our society and its changing values. This was precisely the sentiment reflected by your own party with the introduction of *Toby's Act* in 2012, which codified the protections for 'gender identity' and 'gender expression', that your party is now working actively to abolish.

The description of gender identity as 'highly controversial' is manufactured by an ideology that remains wilfully blind towards contrary facts. In the past decade, close to 3,000 trans and gender-diverse individuals have been murdered for the simple act of their own self-expression, and Ontario is not immune from this trend. In a recent survey of the transgender community in Ontario by Trans Pulse, 20% of trans individuals have been physically or sexually assaulted. In our practice's specific area of focus, Employment Law, the survey shows that nearly half of transgender individuals have reported either being fired, turned down for employment opportunities, or discriminated in the workplace because of who they are. We have first-hand experience addressing these issues.

While the resolution in question commences with removing gender identity education from school curricula, eliminating any acknowledgement of gender identity from an early age will have an irreparable detriment on transgender Ontarians that will impact all aspects of life. The

Canadian Trans Youth Health Survey found that 70% of transgender youth reported sexual harassment, two-thirds reported mental health issues, and over one-third of trans youth had attempted suicide. To refuse to acknowledge these individuals from the earliest days of their fight to partake in everyday society will harm them irreparably, and moves beyond partisanship.

Respectfully, the resolution's reference to gender identity theory as an unscientific 'liberal ideology' is not only incorrect, but frankly disingenuous. In the final rounds of debate regarding *Toby's Act* in June, 2012, the Registered Nurses' Association of Ontario submitted the following: "Toby's Act is an essential step in providing full human rights protection for one of the most marginalized, economically and socially vulnerable groups in our society. Advocating for full human rights protection for trans Ontarians through legislation is an ethical and professional imperative consistent with registered nurses individually and collectively seeking to promote justice."

Mr. Premier, the message above was delivered to the legislature by the Honourable Christine Elliott, who serves today as your Minister of Health. She advocated passionately for the passage of *Toby's Act* in 2012, stating at the time "that's why we're here today: to make sure that we amend our Human Rights Code to properly reflect the need to protect the rights of everyone in our society."

As human rights lawyers, we couldn't have said it better ourselves.

Sincerely,



Stuart Rudner  
Founder



Brittany Taylor  
Associate



Nadia Zaman  
Associate



Shaun Bernstein  
Associate