



HOUSE OF COMMONS
CHAMBRE DES COMMUNES
CANADA

Carolyn Bennett MD

Member of Parliament / députée – Toronto-St. Paul's

Tuesday, April 28, 2015

Valoree McKay, CAE
1150 Morrison Drive, Suite 400
Ottawa, Ontario
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Dear Valoree,

Thank you for taking the time to share your opinion on Bill C-51, the Government's Anti-Terrorism Act.

The Liberal Party of Canada is voting in favour of Bill C-51 because it contains significant measures that will keep Canadians safe. We welcome the measures that (1) lower the threshold for preventative arrests, (2) expand the no-fly list, and (3) allow for greater and more coordinated information sharing between government departments and agencies involved in security matters.

Experts, including witnesses from the House of Commons Public Safety Committee, agree that these measures are necessary to ensure Canadians' collective security. Without collective security, the individual freedoms we cherish as Canadians cannot exist. This truth is supported by the great majority of witnesses presenting before the House of Commons Public Safety Committee, who, while raising concerns about civil liberties, also recognized the need for additional security measures during these times.

We understand Canadians' concerns regarding oversight and accountability for this bill. Liberals know that if a government asks its citizens to give up even a small part of their liberty, they must ensure that there are legislated transparency and accountability safeguards so that these powers are not abused.

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That is why we tried to work with the Conservatives to make this bill better, proposing amendments that balance security and civil liberties based on conversations with Canadians like you. These measures are found in legislation crafted by a Liberal government in response to heightened international security following 9/11 and are similar to measures that are standard internationally.

Following the C-51 committee process, the Government submitted the following amendments that address the issues raised in amendments put forward by the Liberal Party of Canada:

- Remove the word "lawful" prior to "advocacy"/ "protest", so that legitimate forms of demonstration are not captured under this legislation;
- Narrow the scope of information sharing from "with any person for any purpose" to 17 government departments and agencies, therefore restricting the possibility for abuse; and
- Limit and clarify the Minister's intervention powers over Canadian airlines.

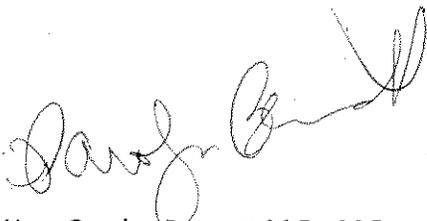
Further, due to public pressure the government clarified in law that CSIS is not a police agency and has no power of arrest.

These were needed and welcomed changes, but not enough. Canada is the only nation of its kind without national security oversight being carried out by parliamentarians. If the Harper Government will not act responsibly and legislate transparency and accountability measures into this bill, then the Liberal Party of Canada is committed to presenting these proposals as part of our platform in the upcoming federal election.

We also know that Canada's response to terrorism goes far beyond legislative measure alone; it must include a robust plan for preventing radicalization before it takes root. This means that our security agencies must be adequately resourced so that they can carry out these new tasks required of them.

Thank you again for taking the time to share your opinion. It is through dialogue with Canadians like you that we can continue to ensure that the policies we support and create are representative of the values and needs of Canadians.

Sincerely,



Hon. Carolyn Bennett M.D., M.P.
Toronto-St Paul's