



HOUSE OF COMMONS
CANADA

OTTAWA

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Valerie Smith
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Dear Ms. Smith,

I am writing in response to your recent letter to Jack Layton, a copy of which you forwarded to me, on the subject of hate propaganda laws. I regret that your earlier correspondence to me did not receive a reply to the specific concern you raised around the inclusion of "gender" in hate propaganda laws. I support the inclusion of "gender" in the law on hate propaganda, but unfortunately it was very clear that there was nowhere near the level of support for this change needed to move ahead in the House of Commons. On the other hand, the inclusion of "sexual orientation" has been supported by all provincial Attorneys-General and the federal Minister of Justice. I was certainly not prepared to table a bill that had absolutely no hope of support, when I do have some chance of getting through the more narrow bill including "sexual orientation". As you know my bill did pass the House at second reading and is now before the Justice Committee.

Perhaps the greatest challenge that remains before moving ahead on the inclusion of "gender" is the fact that I and other Parliamentarians have received no indication of active support for this proposed change from the key feminist and women's groups across the country, such as NAC or the FFQ. I would suggest that you might want to lobby these groups to persuade them to seek this change. Certainly elected officials will not move ahead in the absence of any significant public pressure for these changes.

Thank you for writing on this important subject. I do hope that I have clarified my position on this issue, and look forward to your active support for the changes proposed in my Bill C-250.

Sincerely yours,

Svend J Robinson, MP
Burnaby-Douglas

Cc : Jack Layton

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