

MEDIA RELEASE

Ontario Secondary School Teachers' Federation (OSSTF)
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Public incitement of hatred law: OSSTF calls for protection of women

The Ontario Secondary School Teachers' Federation (OSSTF) is part of a coalition that has been working to curb the effects of media violence on children and adolescents. On January 17, the coalition of trustees, principals, teachers, students, parents, and police made a public appeal to the Federal Minister of Justice to amend the Criminal Code public incitement of hatred laws to conform to Section 15 of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms, thereby granting protection to girls and women.

On Thursday, April 19, 2007, Liberal MP Borys Wrzesnewskyj (Etobicoke Centre) will re-introduce a motion in the House of Commons requesting all party support for Bill C-254, his Private Member's Bill that adds gender to the identifiable groups protected under the *Criminal Code* law on public incitement of hatred. Currently, the law protects those groups identified by colour, race, religion, ethnic origin and sexual orientation.

In commenting on Bill C-254, Ken Coran, president of OSSTF said, "As an active member of the media violence coalition and as educators we understand that prevention is key to stopping the effects of media violence but we also believe that leaving women out of the current law on public incitement of hatred is just plain wrong."

Adding, "OSSTF is proud to add its name to the long list of individuals and organizations that have been calling for this change. We believe that leaving women and girls off the list compromises their safety and this amendment is long overdue.

While Legislation should not be perceived as a perfect solution, the proposed change to the Criminal Code does send a strong message that as a society we will no longer tolerate this failure to protect all our citizens," he concluded.

OSSTF/FEÉSO, founded in 1919, has 60,000 members across Ontario. They include public high school teachers, occasional teachers, educational assistants, continuing education teachers and instructors, psychologists, secretaries, speech-language pathologists, social workers, plant support personnel, attendance counsellors, and many others in education.

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