

We the people

For some strange and uncomfortable reason, likely part of an inexorable maturation process, I finally understand the importance of the freedoms many of our forefathers risked their lives to defend.

Our basic freedoms in this country are enshrined in constitutional law as the Charter of Rights and Freedoms. I think I'm correct in assuming that the majority of us know that the Charter guarantees every Canadian wide-ranging freedom to choose.

Being able to choose a political party, the gender of your life partner, the movies you watch, the books you read, and the street on which you live are just a few of the freedoms that form the fabric of our lives. Few of us think much about the luxury of living in a

society that enshrines institutions that have democratic principles, forming the cement that holds them (and the rest of us) together. However, it never hurts to occasionally think about these things and revel in the plain good luck we all have to be living at this point in time on this spot on the planet. Knowing how important democratic principles are to the integrity of our societal structure, it seems obvious that Canadians would resist any attempt to divert or subvert our democratic rights with the same passion exhibited by the people who envisioned those tenets in the first place.

One of the simplest and perhaps most important freedoms we have is the freedom to choose our leaders. The right to vote and to be confident that

our votes are considered important (by being counted) is integral to our confidence in the inviolability of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. The fact that someone like Robert Pickton, irrespective of his alleged heinous crimes, still has the right to vote and to expect his vote to have the same importance as every other citizen is central to our national image.

However, it seems that the Canadian Medical Association is suggesting that it may be okay to challenge their own fairly elected president-elect from British Columbia at the CMA general assembly in August by having a more politically palatable candidate stand from the floor of the assembly. There appears to be an

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Harper a no-show

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showing your presence. Nothing demonstrates compassionate caring like giving of yourself, and Mr Harper knows this well. His personal visit to Afghanistan was an important, tangible gesture to Canadian military personnel, as well as the citizens of Canada. As a physician I regret that Mr Harper delegated the task of representing the government of Canada to his minister of health. I know Canadians care about the global pandemic of HIV/AIDS and I am sure Mr Harper does too. It just would have been better if he could have said it in person.

—HMO

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assumption by a group of connected individuals from the political core of our national association that it is okay to subordinate the firmly stated political wishes of a majority of BC's physicians and put forward their own preferred candidate. Regardless of the fact that there is a constitutional loophole that allows this aberration, I have great difficulty accepting the fact that these connected few in Ontario would even consider trampling all over the rights of BC's physicians. Such action would reflect a paternalistic mind-set by implying that "we know what's best for you."

I should be clear that this has nothing to do with individuals and everything to do with democratic

rights, yours and mine. No individual or group should assume they have the right to subordinate my/our rights to their own political agenda.

There is a very real possibility that this event may never come to pass as there is likely to be a fair amount of bad press about all of this. But I am still tremendously bothered that there appears to have been a strong political lobby within our national association to push a "preferred" political agenda forward with very little thought to the democratic rights of the doctors in BC. I wonder what will be the next freedom deemed to be unnecessary or unimportant.

—JAW

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