



ISSN 1710-9477

Legislative Assembly
of Ontario

First Session, 40th Parliament

Assemblée législative
de l'Ontario

Première session, 40^e législature

Official Report of Debates (Hansard)

Monday 7 May 2012

Journal des débats (Hansard)

Lundi 7 mai 2012

**Standing Committee on
Social Policy**

Accepting Schools Act, 2012

Anti-Bullying Act, 2012

**Comité permanent de
la politique sociale**

Loi de 2012 pour
des écoles tolérantes

Loi de 2012 sur la lutte
contre l'intimidation

Chair: Ernie Hardeman
Clerk: Katch Koch

Président : Ernie Hardeman
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Room 500, West Wing, Legislative Building
111 Wellesley Street West, Queen's Park
Toronto ON M7A 1A2
Telephone 416-325-7400; fax 416-325-7430
Published by the Legislative Assembly of Ontario



Service du Journal des débats et d'interprétation
Salle 500, aile ouest, Édifice du Parlement
111, rue Wellesley ouest, Queen's Park
Toronto ON M7A 1A2
Téléphone, 416-325-7400; télécopieur, 416-325-7430
Publié par l'Assemblée législative de l'Ontario

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

STANDING COMMITTEE ON
SOCIAL POLICYCOMITÉ PERMANENT DE
LA POLITIQUE SOCIALE

Monday 7 May 2012

Lundi 7 mai 2012

The committee met at 1400 in committee room 1.

The Chair (Mr. Ernie Hardeman): Welcome to the May 7 Standing Committee on Social Policy. We're here today to deal with Bill 13, An Act to amend the Education Act with respect to bullying and other matters, and Bill 14, An Act to designate Bullying Awareness and Prevention Week in Schools and to provide for bullying prevention curricula, policies and administrative accountability in schools.

SUBCOMMITTEE REPORT

The Chair (Mr. Ernie Hardeman): The first item on the agenda, of course, is to deal with the subcommittee report.

Mr. Bob Delaney: Your subcommittee on committee business met on Thursday, May 3, 2012, to consider the method of proceeding on Bill 13, An Act to amend the Education Act with respect to bullying and other matters, and Bill 14, An Act to designate Bullying Awareness and Prevention Week in Schools and to provide for bullying prevention curricula, policies and administrative accountability in schools, and recommends the following:

(1) That, as per the order of the House dated May 3, 2012, the committee hold public hearings on May 7, May 8, May 14 and May 15, 2012, in Toronto and on May 22, 2012, in Ottawa.

(2) That the clerk of the committee issue a press release and post information regarding the hearings on the Ontario parliamentary channel, the Legislative Assembly website, the Toronto Star, l'Express, the Ottawa Citizen, Le Droit, and Canada NewsWire.

(3) That interested people who wish to be considered to make an oral presentation on Bills 13 and 14 should contact the clerk of the committee as soon as possible.

(4) That the scheduling of the presenters be done on a first-come, first-served basis.

(5) That the length of presentations be 15 minutes for groups or individuals.

(6) That the deadline for written submissions be Tuesday, May 22, 2012, at 5 p.m.

(7) That the research officer provide the committee a summary of the Toronto hearings on Friday, May 18, 2012, and a summary of the Ottawa hearings on Wednesday, May 23, 2012.

(8) That, as per the order of the House, the deadline for filing amendments with the clerk of the committee on Bill 13 be 5 p.m. on Thursday, May 24, 2012.

(9) That, as per the order of the House, clause-by-clause consideration of Bill 13 be Monday, May 28 and Tuesday, May 29, 2012.

(10) That the clerk of the committee, in consultation with the Chair, be authorized prior to the adoption of the report of the subcommittee to commence making any preliminary arrangements to facilitate the committee's proceedings.

This, Chair, is the report of your subcommittee.

The Chair (Mr. Ernie Hardeman): Thank you very much. You've heard the report. Any discussion on the report? If not, all those in favour? Opposed? The motion is carried.

That concludes the housekeeping business.

ACCEPTING SCHOOLS ACT, 2012

LOI DE 2012 POUR
DES ÉCOLES TOLÉRANTES

ANTI-BULLYING ACT, 2012

LOI DE 2012 SUR LA LUTTE
CONTRE L'INTIMIDATION

Consideration of the following bills:

Bill 13, An Act to amend the Education Act with respect to bullying and other matters / Projet de loi 13, Loi modifiant la Loi sur l'éducation en ce qui a trait à l'intimidation et à d'autres questions;

Bill 14, An Act to designate Bullying Awareness and Prevention Week in Schools and to provide for bullying prevention curricula, policies and administrative accountability in schools / Projet de loi 14, Loi désignant la Semaine de la sensibilisation à l'intimidation et de la prévention dans les écoles et prévoyant des programmes-cadres, des politiques et une responsabilité administrative à l'égard de la prévention de l'intimidation dans les écoles.

INSTITUTE FOR CANADIAN VALUES

The Chair (Mr. Ernie Hardeman): We will now go, as the subcommittee report said, to hearing from the delegations before us. The first one is the Institute for Canadian Values: Charles McVety, president, Mendel Kaplan and Ekron Malcolm. If you want to come forward and take a seat at the end of the table. As you heard in the

previous subcommittee report, the presentations will be 15 minutes in duration. Whatever time you take for your presentation will be taken off the 15 minutes. If there's sufficient time at the end of the 15 minutes for questions from the committee members, we will entertain those questions. With that, if you could start off by introducing yourself at the mike and then those with you for Hansard, to make sure that they're in Hansard properly. Thank you very much for coming in.

Mr. Charles McVety: Thank you, Mr. Chair. My name is Charles McVety. I'm the president of the Institute for Canadian Values and Canada Christian College. Beside me is Rabbi Mendel Kaplan, who is the rabbi for Flamingo Chabad Synagogue, and to my far left is Rev. Ekron Malcolm, who is the director of the Institute for Canadian Values.

I want to thank you for allowing us to speak today. On behalf of the 55,000 members of Institute for Canadian Values, on behalf of the 20,000 people who have signed petitions—we have brought those petitions here for you to see; they're in these boxes, and I don't think we have time to unpack them—and on behalf of the tens of thousands of Canadians who have expressed their concern with this bill, I first want to commend the Legislature for coming forward with a bill to protect the vulnerable children who suffer as a result of bullying. Bullying is a scourge on our society today and it damages children. We commend you for coming forward with legislation, but at this time we would like to oppose certain clauses of the legislation and ask you to consider amending it.

With all legislation, it needs to be studied. What needs to be considered are the unintended outcomes, because, of course, the intended outcome is good here, that children will be protected. But the unintended outcome we see as threefold.

The first outcome is that this bill appears to focus primarily on one group of people, as if one group of children are special and then the others are not quite so special: the Orwellian thought that we are all equal but some of us are more equal than others. This of course leads many people to question the spirit of the document, when you come forward with a focus on one group of people that is not even mentioned in the Toronto District School Board survey of over 100,000 children when asked the causes for bullying. The number one, of course, was body shape. The second was grades. Third was racial background. Fourth was language. Fifth was gender, male or female. Sixth was religion. But this bill focuses on something not even mentioned in the survey. That begs the question: Are our children second-class? Is this setting up a tiered system in our society where some children are special and other children are not so special as to have this level of protection?

In fact, this Bill 13 embraces the teaching of a radical sex education program that has never been implemented in a pedagogical way anywhere on planet earth at any time. It has not been studied. It has not been tested. Are our children going to be subjected to this radical teaching, teaching such as six genders and teaching such

as anal sex and oral sex, at very young and inappropriate age levels?

This is the result of the clause that requires boards to “develop and implement an equity and inclusive education policy, and, if required by the minister, submit the policy to the minister and implement changes to the policy as directed by the minister.”

In my hand, and we have given you all a copy, is the Toronto District School Board's equity and inclusive policy program, which includes teachings such as children in grade 3 reading the book *Are You a Boy or a Girl?*, role playing, opposite gender role playing, teaching children to study the pride parade and even entertaining having their own pride parade in their own schools.

This type of teaching was already presented by the Ministry of Education back in April 2010, and there was resounding opposition to that sex education program. It was so strong, parents stood up so strongly, that the Premier withdrew the program after just two days of when it became public. But now it has come back, and it's coming in with the force of law under the guise of bullying.

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The other problem with this bill as we see it is that section 9 will force Catholic Christian schools to violate their own conscience and belief system. This program will require that all schools, including the Catholic schools, support activities and organizations that are antithetical to their very existence. Now, this is something that I believe is a violation of our Charter of Rights and Freedoms. I believe that our religious leaders should not be forced to entertain organizations that are antithetical to what they believe. I believe that we are guaranteed, under the first fundamental freedom, the freedom of conscience and religion, that we will not be forced by big government. But in this case, in this bill, big government is also going to, in sections 9 and 7, require that pastors that are renting school auditoriums for the purpose of having a worship service on Sunday will also have to abide by the minister's code of conduct. This is egregious. It violates basic charter rights. More importantly, history is littered with overreaching governments that come out with something that looks good but has unintended consequences.

This is why great leaders like John Locke championed liberalism: for the purpose of being free from government oppression, to pursue life and liberty. Locke once said the Bible is one of the greatest blessings bestowed by God upon the children of men. But the spirit of this bill appears to be anti-Bible. It appears to have an attack on those who hold Judeo-Christian principles. In fact, the other handout that we gave you shows you how the Premier launched this campaign. We're going to show you a one-minute video of Dan Savage, the Premier's partner, who—Dan Savage, two years ago, launched the *It Gets Better* project, and when the Premier launched Bill 13, he launched it by using an *It Gets Better* video, making his own Dan Savage video. Well, Dan Savage

has great disdain for the Bible. Speaking at a school in Seattle to high school students, he called the Bible “BS,” but he didn’t use the letters. He spoke with vulgar, profanity-laced language to attack the Bible. This is not the role of the government, to partner with such a man to launch such a project and then come out with such a bill that would marginalize the Bible and believers in our society.

I ask you the question: As members of this committee, have you ever taught your own children these principles? Have you taught them six genders? Have you taught them, when they’re eight years old, about role playing and about being an opposite gender, and reading a book, *Are You a Boy or a Girl?* I don’t see anyone saying yes, so I presume that you have not. By doing so, you are willing to do to our children what you’re not willing to do to your own.

My daughter is a precious little 14-year-old girl. I ask you, I beg of you, not to do this to my daughter and not to do this to my friends’ daughters or sons and not to do this to Ontario’s children. The Bible is a very important document in our society. It does not deserve to be attacked by our government.

Therefore, we ask you respectfully to amend Bill 13. Make it about bullying instead of about bullying people who believe the Bible. We’re going to show you this one-minute little clip of what we, as children of the Bible, have to put up with.

Video presentation.

Mr. Charles McVety: This is the type of leadership that this bill has partnered with. Rabbi Kaplan is a very outspoken opponent of, as Dan Savage has said, beating people up because of the Bible.

Rabbi Mendel Kaplan: I want to begin first by thanking God that I live in a country where I have the freedom to speak. It wasn’t always like that. Both of my paternal grandparents were savagely beaten to death by the communists for teaching the values that are 3,300 years old.

I was bullied in school, in three different schools. My son was bullied in school. I’ve counselled more than a dozen children and their families in the last 15 years who were bullied in schools in Ontario. It was never because of sexual orientation, and I don’t believe that that is the primary cause of bullying.

Anti-bullying legislation is a good thing. We should seek to protect the most vulnerable members of our society. We should not be thinly veiling a radical sex education program as anti-bullying.

We are told in our Torah, in our oral traditions, to be a disciple of only one sage, only one prophet. Only once are those words invoked in the MiSinai, and it says we should be—

Remarks in Hebrew.

We should be a disciple of Aaron, the high priest.

Remarks in Hebrew.

Freely translated: “Love peace, pursue peace and then seek to bring people into a life of spiritual meaning.”

Our sages have taught us that even if you never influence anybody insofar as a life of spiritual meaning is

concerned, if you reach out to others with love, if you pursue peace, that, in and of itself, is a worthy and meaningful endeavour. That is what this should be focused on. We should be teaching people that each and every human being is created in the image of God. We should be teaching people that each and every single human being deserves the rights and dignity to live as he or she pleases. We should not be forcing children into a radical sex education program which marginalizes and demonizes those who believe in the Bible.

I have been personally attacked in the last two years for my beliefs in the Bible. I have been labelled all sorts of things—

The Chair (Mr. Ernie Hardeman): Thank you very much. We have consumed the 15 minutes available, so we thank you very much for your presentation.

Mr. Charles McVety: We have one more speaker, but—you cannot entertain him?

The Chair (Mr. Ernie Hardeman): No. We have a room full of people that are all waiting for their 15 minutes, so we have to adhere very tightly to the schedule. We thank you very much for your presentation. If you have anything further you would like to present in writing, we’d be more than happy to receive it.

Mr. Charles McVety: Okay. Thank you very much.

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JUBILEE CENTRE FOR CHRISTIAN
SOCIAL ACTION

The Chair (Mr. Ernie Hardeman): The next presentation is the Jubilee Centre for Christian Social Action: Dominic Tse, president. As a presenter, we’ll have 15 minutes for your presentation, and if at the end of the presentation there is sufficient time, we will have questions, the time evenly split between the three parties, unless it’s of the size that it can’t be properly split; then we will start with one caucus and everybody will rotate on different presenters. Thank you very much for coming in, and the floor is yours.

Rev. Dominic Tse: Thank you. I just want to make sure that every member of the committee has a copy of my submission.

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: Are these available for everybody?

Rev. Dominic Tse: I have given Mr. Koch 25 copies.

The Chair (Mr. Ernie Hardeman): The clerk is passing them out.

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: Okay.

Rev. Dominic Tse: As the previous speaker mentioned, boldly, we want to have Bill 13 amended. So I did some homework. I combined Bill 13 and Bill 14 together under my little submission and I’ll try to pick different elements of Bill 14 and fit it into the framework of Bill 13 and modify some elements of Bill 13 which I see that can be improved and/or deleted.

My goal as a Canadian of Chinese descent is to present a good bill so that members of all communities will be free from bullying. Personally, I have kids who

have grown up from Ontario schools. I'm a pastor and I have experienced my son coming home a few times saying, "Being a pastor's kid, they call me names and they call me 'Jesus freak.'" He has lived with that name for a long time. He used to carry a little Bible, a small Bible, a Gideon Bible in his backpack, and he used to pray before meals, and he got called names. He would come home crying.

That's the kind of bullying that we do not want to happen. I can speak from my own personal experience as a Chinese Canadian that we have suffered all kinds of discrimination, and I really want all schools to be free from all kinds of bullying.

So I did my homework. I tried to look at the whole thing rationally and tried to propose some common-sense amendments to Bill 13 and Bill 14. I adopted section 1, the first section. I adopted the definitions of Bill 14 in place of those of Bill 13, which I think are more detailed and more elaborate. I think the terms in Bill 13 are a bit more subjective, such as "ought to know" or "would likely," so I prefer the definitions of bullying in Bill 14.

But I also like the second part of Bill 13 in terms of definitions because it spells out all the behaviour which occurs in different contexts, like power imbalances, and I think that's a distinct part of Bill 13 vis-à-vis Bill 14. I think this is a good part because in many cases bullying in Ontario schools happens according to these cases. I also include all the cyberbullying and everything.

Now, let's come down to page number 3, and that's the paragraph about the equity and inclusive education policy. It is used to replace the old ethnocultural and anti-racism policy in the Education Act of old. Here, the new one—my amendment, recommended, would be to "require boards to develop and implement an equity and inclusive education policy through consultation with all stakeholders in the school community and members of the community at large." I really wanted that in it because it's a policy that affects all members, all family members in a community. So a thorough consultation, I believe, is in place.

The reference to the minister, I recommend to be dropped, because if you have a very thorough consultation process, which involves all stakeholders from parents, community members, teachers, students, employees, trustees and board staff, I don't think we can not trust them. We should trust this process, and the reference to the minister's so-called veto powers should be dropped. The rest of them are basically important from different aspects.

The other reference that I want to make is on page 5.

"The act is amended by adding the following section," on 300.0.1, "The purposes of this part include the following:

"1. To create schools in Ontario that are safe, inclusive and accepting of all pupils.

"2. To encourage a positive school climate and prevent inappropriate behaviour, including bullying, sexual assault, gender-based violence and incidents based on sexual orientation."

The original word in Bill 13 was "homophobia." I think "homophobia" is problematic, because it's hard to define. It's also restrictive, because it basically treats with homosexual people. I want to propose to substitute "sexual orientation," because we know that "sexual orientation" is a broader term and it's more easily defined, rather than "homophobic," a more subjective-oriented term.

Another amendment that I propose is about the renting of school properties. On page 7 of my bill, so to speak, I said this section about requiring persons or entities to sign an agreement to follow standards that are consistent with the code of conduct is dropped for the following reasons:

Section 301(1) of the Education Act says: "The minister may establish a code of conduct governing the behaviour of all persons in schools." It falls under the section "discipline" in the Education Act, so it's about discipline in a school. It governs people—persons. That means everybody in the school. But when you rent a school building, the school is empty, so there's no person for the code of conduct to govern when you rent it to somebody else. I don't see the connection requiring a third party—for example, somebody wants just to rent the parking lot for a bake sale—to be involved with a code of conduct that governs persons in the school. Mind you, the school is empty at the time.

Also, this mandatory requirement would add unnecessary administrative burdens for board staff and also community or charitable organizations. It requires much more than just making them sign an agreement. For example, what about if a group violates the agreement? Would there be a penalty, terminations of the lease? Would there be an investigative process to find out if they actually violated? Would there be an appeal? Would there be lawsuits? That's opening a can of worms, administratively speaking. I think that's not a good policy. It overdoes it. The proper mandate of the bill governs the original conduct in the school, so I think that section is really unnecessary and, administratively speaking, it's a nightmare.

On the second part of page 7, again, it's similar words. I substitute "sexual orientation" instead of "homophobia."

Let's get to the main thing, the main paragraph. I don't have time to go through all the sections, but the main paragraph is about the gay-straight alliance, which is on page 13.

The following section is dropped, for it is unnecessary and highly problematic. The original paragraph reads: "The act is amended by adding the following section:

"Board support for certain pupil activities and organizations

"303.1 Every board shall support pupils who want to establish and lead,

"(a) activities or organizations that promote gender equity;

"(b) activities or organizations that promote anti-racism;"

“(c) activities or organizations that promote the awareness and understanding of, and respect for, people with disabilities; or

“(d) activities or organizations that promote the awareness and understanding of, and respect for, people of all sexual orientations and gender identities, including organizations with the name gay-straight alliance or another name.”

I find this paragraph highly problematic, for the following reasons: First of all, it's clear that only four kinds of activities are listed—four of them. But if you go back to the original paragraph 1 of Bill 13, it lists out more than 10. It lists out situations of bullying that include size, strength, age, intelligence, peer group power, economic/social status, religion, ethnic origin, sexual orientation, family circumstances, gender, race, disability or the receipt of special education. To be fair, to be a good law—I don't understand why all the other groups are neglected and why we're retaining only four. To be fair and comprehensive, all of these issues should be addressed adequately, at least with a line or subsections for each factor.

Some of these factors, I'll admit, are quite serious. For example, as you heard, members, size is a major factor in bullying, and religion is also a major factor in bullying. Somehow, they are strangely missing in this part.

The other one: Among the four subsections, only the one concerning sexual orientation has a special activity attached to it. This is highly unbalanced. What about the other ones? If you want to really address bullying for all people, you've got to have all of them, and you should attach a specific activity for all of them. I understand that gay-straight alliances, to some people, are a very highly effective way to counter homophobia, but what about other groups to counter racism? They should be mentioned, as well. So this is highly unbalanced.

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Also, the section begins with the phrase, “Every board shall support pupils who want to establish and lead,” and so on. I dug out the meaning of the word “board” in the Education Act, and it says “‘board’ means a district school board or a school authority.” And “‘district school board’ means an English-language public board or English-language separate board and their French counterparts. It means they include the Catholic boards. Also, ‘school authority’ includes all sorts of boards, and it specifically mentions Protestant separate boards. So it seems clear that “every board” does really mean every board.

I wonder if this will open the Ministry of Education towards constitutional challenges based on religious rights. The Catholic schools were granted religious rights to teach Catholic doctrine. Some of them are quite strongly against gay-straight alliances—not because of the groups, but because of the values embedded in the gay-straight alliances. That may open a kind of constitutional challenge.

What about home schools? It's not clear. I'm not a legal, constitutional expert, but if home schools are also

governed by this “board” here, then it may open for unnecessary challenges towards the Ministry of Education by parents—voting parental rights. That's not necessary.

Finally, the first statement that “Every board shall support pupils”—and I've talked to a number of teachers. I asked, “If someone wants to have a club, how does it work?” A teacher friend said, “If someone wants to have a club, he or she will go to the teacher or go to the vice-principal or so on, and they talk about it. If everything is okay, they can have whatever club they want.” But this one starts from the board and supports the pupils. What about all these chains of authority in between: teachers, principals and parents? This is highly unusual for any school activities.

I believe if any parent, any student wants to have any activities, just go through the normal process. If they want to have a gay-straight alliance, go to the principal. If the principal says it's okay, have a gay-straight alliance. That's not a problem. My problem with this is, it starts from the board—should support the pupils. It just bypasses all the professional people in between: teachers, counsellors and principals. And it especially bypasses the involvement of parents.

These are major problems. Therefore, my recommendation is, either you do a group with a name for all the factors mentioned, or just simply drop this paragraph and let whoever wants to have any group go through the normal process.

We have been accused or misunderstood as we're against gay-straight alliances. I'm not against gay-straight alliances. I just want to leave that decision to the local authorities, to the students, to the principals, so that they can have their groups.

That concludes my little combination of my bill, and I hope that will save you some work if you want to use it as a basis.

The Chair (Mr. Ernie Hardeman): Thank you very much for your presentation. Again, the time is consumed. We very much appreciate your involvement.

CONCERNED CATHOLIC PARENTS OF ONTARIO

The Chair (Mr. Ernie Hardeman): The next delegation is Concerned Catholic Parents of Ontario: Kim Galvao, director. Welcome. Thank you very much for being here. As with the others, you have 15 minutes to make your presentation. If there's time left at the end, we'll have questions. I would just point out that if you're going near the end—if I go like that, you don't have to stop; there's one minute left.

Mrs. Kim Galvao: Dear distinguished members of the provincial Parliament, I would like to start by thanking each one of you for your commitment to serve the public. I know that the families of elected representatives make a great sacrifice by significant time away from home that is required by your job.

My name is Kim Galvao. I am a stay-at-home mom. I have three children in elementary school, ages 12, 10 and

eight. I'm a very devoted, traditional Catholic who is faithful to the teachings of my church. I am raising my children to be good Catholics, and hope that they will absorb their faith and use it to contribute to society to make it a better place to live.

Each day, through example, I try to show how one should be respectful to others, and I have taught my children that it is wrong to bully. I have talked with my oldest son about Bill 13, and he told me, "Bill 13 will not stop bullying. Every child knows that bullying is wrong. How we treat others, Mummy, is learned from home." He is right. We need to teach our children how to love, be kind, respectful. This is not self-taught but a work in progress that takes many years.

As each of my children grow, I will gently correct and use teachable moments. I have found that my sincerely held religious beliefs do more to ensure that my children will treat others with respect than any government policy could accomplish.

I have never been involved in politics before, until I learned about Bill 13 and the controversial equity policy which will be codified into law by Bill 13. I am a stay-at-home mom, and I have studied the evidence and firmly believe that there is an agenda embedded within Bill 13. Despite my great discomfort in getting involved in politics, even being here today before you, as a mother I need to stand up and oppose this bill.

I started a parental organization out of the Waterloo region called Concerned Catholic Parents of Ontario. On behalf of many concerned Catholic parents and citizens from other faith traditions whom I have met over the past few months, I am here to share with you my grave concerns with Dalton McGuinty's Bill 13.

With this proposed legislation, we believe that the state is increasingly trespassing on parental rights and pushing programs in our school which undermine the religious and moral values that parents instill in their kids at home.

Dalton McGuinty's Bill 13 purports to be about punishing bullies and reducing bullying in school, and we completely agree with those apparent goals. The most common reason kids are bullied is because of their physical appearance; for example, being too fat, too skinny or wearing glasses. Contrary to what some are claiming, sexual orientation does not rank high on the list of reasons of why kids are bullied. Kids are bullied for many other reasons. Bullying is always wrong, including for reasons of same-sex attraction. We want the government to protect all our children and stop pushing an agenda that smacks of social engineering.

Bill 13 has been criticized by parents, religious leaders and family values groups across Ontario over the controversial sex ed component of the proposed legislation. It is in the preamble of the bill and strewn throughout the government's equity and inclusive education policy which is being codified into law.

As a mom of three children in elementary school, I am very alarmed to see a sexual agenda being imposed on our schools through Dalton McGuinty's Bill 13. As a

mom, I do not want my young children taught there are six genders. The equity policy being codified into law under part II of Bill 13 will make the disputed LGBTTIQ gender theory a part of school curriculum—see excerpts from pages 90 and 91 of the government's equity and inclusive education strategy document.

As a mom, I do not want my children taught the disputed theory that a person's gender is not connected to their physical anatomy—see excerpt from page 89 from the guidelines of implementation.

As a Catholic, I strongly object that our religious schools are being forced to permit GSA clubs that contradict the Christian mission of the church. GSAs are not permitted in the Catholic school system because they are known to conduct activism which is contrary to Catholic teaching. GSAs and the term "gay" or "lesbian" bring along with them a socio-political agenda that is contrary to Catholic teaching and which tends to affirm the gay lifestyle as morally acceptable. And for the Catholic laity, we believe that the Catholic bishops are the final authority in matters of faith and morals, and not the state.

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We do not understand why the education minister has said that only GSA groups will be allowed. What is wrong with the Respecting Difference document? What part of the document does the government not like? The document is very respectful and gives dignity to all students who are bullied.

I see the government interference as a sign of violating parental rights and attacking the freedom of religion. In fact, I would say that this government, the media and the big unions are bullying little parents like me. The "big three" have tried to take away my human dignity by using disparaging names, and have been hostile and negative towards faith-based parents in the media. If this committee truly cares about inclusivity and diversity, then you must respect the values of traditionally principled families. You cannot value diversity if your intent is to eradicate, undermine or disrespect our values. Diversity is a sham if you only accept one certain set of values but suppress others.

This government and this committee must respect the right of parents to teach their children about human sexuality according to their faith convictions, without being undermined by the state. The bottom line is that Bill 13, and the equity and inclusive education strategy that undergrids it, provides too much inappropriate, sexually focused information. Our children do not need more sex education; they need less. This type of education does not benefit the child but rather hurts the child by causing confusion, worry, and pitting the school against the parents.

We as parents are called to be wise, prudent and vigilant. We are called to protect our children when we sense danger. When we see disputed gender theories being pushed on our kids in the very earliest grades, we rightfully worry that it may cause psychosexual confusion and gender identity confusion. This is wrong. I re-

spectfully ask you to remove the offensive clauses from Bill 13; namely, the GSA requirements, the equity policy requirement, the clause that takes away the power from the local trustees and gives it to the education minister. The clause of expulsion for any student bullying is seen as too harsh.

We respectfully ask that you set aside Bill 13 and use Bill 14 instead. Bill 14 does not have a hidden sexual agenda.

I would like to close with my son's words to me: "Go and speak. Protect my rights as a child and my innocence. I hold you accountable because you are my mother and it is your job to protect me." Thank you.

The Chair (Mr. Ernie Hardeman): Thank you very much. We have about four minutes left. Does somebody want to start it?

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: Thanks very much. We have no questions. We appreciate you showing up.

The Chair (Mr. Ernie Hardeman): Go ahead, Mr. Tabuns.

Mr. Peter Tabuns: Thank you very much for coming here today and making a presentation. Do you think that we do have a problem with homophobia in the schools?

Mrs. Kim Galvao: What is your term of homophobia?

Mr. Peter Tabuns: An irrational dislike or hatred of people who are gay.

Mrs. Kim Galvao: I think there might be a small minority, but I think ordinary parents like myself—as my son said, we just see other kids. We're not looking to distinguish. We just want to accept other children for who they are. We're not looking to put a label on them.

Mr. Peter Tabuns: And in fact, I take that as an admirable approach, but I hear from children, teenagers in my riding, commonly the use of disparaging remarks about people who may not be gay but, if male, are not particularly macho, or females who are tomboys. That sort of negative language goes around and—

Mrs. Kim Galvao: And that should be dealt with appropriately; that has to be talked about. I think the important thing is that we need to teach children to see the dignity of each person and then not to judge a child by what they look like or their characteristics.

Mr. Peter Tabuns: Yeah, and I would argue similarly. I would say that there is an ongoing stream of language and terms that I would call homophobia, denigrating a child's sexual orientation or even just the fact that they don't fit the common stereotype of what male or female is, even if their gender orientation would be the majority orientation.

Mrs. Kim Galvao: Once again, I think we need to look at the dignity and focus on the dignity of the person, of the child. We need to stop just looking at just homophobia and look at the other reasons that children are bullied, not just for that reason. We have to have a group that accommodates all people. If we have four groups, myself personally, I think that's going to breed segregation and not integration.

The Chair (Mr. Ernie Hardeman): Thank you very much for your presentation—and the questions. We'll start the next round, when there's an opportunity, with the government side.

For those who are in the audience and standing and who are going to get tired standing, we have room 151 set up so you can go there and sit. It will be televised there so that you can see everything that's happening as though you were here in the room. It is just down the hall, around the corner.

MARKHAM CHINESE PARENT FELLOWSHIP

The Chair (Mr. Ernie Hardeman): The next presentation is the Markham Chinese Parent Fellowship: Billy Pang, Allan Tam and Anita Fung. Good afternoon. As you start, if you would just—the 15 minutes is available, the same as with the other presentations; I believe you were in the room. When I go like that, there's one minute left. Having said that, before you start the presentation, if you could just give the names of the individuals at the table for the Hansard.

Mr. Allan Tam: Okay, thank you. Good afternoon, Mr. Chairman and members of the committee. My name is Allan Tam. I'm the co-chair of Markham Chinese Parent Fellowship. With me today is Anita Fung. She is the parent member.

First off, I would like to thank the committee for giving an opportunity to make this presentation in support of Bill 14 and to oppose Bill 13 today.

Parents are the first and most enduring educators of their children. Parents are the most important people in a child's life. They are their child's first teachers. Children are often faced with choices that affect their development and safety. As parents, we must do our best to provide education and guidance to prepare our children to make the best decisions.

Here are the reasons why Bill 13 must be stopped that I would like to address, and they relate to the weakening of democracy which Bill 13 will usher in.

Bill 13 shifts away the power from local school boards, which represent parents and ratepayers, and transfers it instead to bureaucrats in the government. Clause 2.1 of Bill 13 gives the Minister of Education extra power over the equity and inclusive policy. The minister can direct and force school boards to change their equity and inclusive education policy as she or he sees fit.

Under the equity and inclusive policy, the Toronto District School Board released, in 2011, a 219-page curriculum resource guide entitled Challenging Homophobia—for K-to-12 students. On pages 9 and 10, parents cannot remove their children from the classes or before classes. Also, a note will not be sent to the parents on controversial and sensitive topics. If Bill 13 passes, it will apply to all school boards in Ontario.

In Canada, theatrical movie ratings are a provincial responsibility. If a film—for example, a movie, video,

DVD, VCD or video game—is to be distributed or screened in Ontario, it must first be classified by the Ontario Film Review Board. Films and videos are classified to help parents make viewing choices. Parents know what they are giving to their children before they bring a film home.

1450

Many parents feel unsafe at school if they do not know the daily school activity of their children. Like the movie ratings, we want to know ahead of time so that we can be prepared. The Ontario Ministry of Education embraces parent engagement. You say parents' involvement leads to student success. We say that parents' engagement is the only way to prevent bullying at school—not the MPP, not the minister, not Bill 13.

As part of a democratic nation, we want the power to be kept closest to the people who are affected. We want parents, through school trustees, to have control over what happens in schools. We want parents and school trustees in the local community to retain input and, ultimately, control over important policies, especially those which may affect fundamental issues like child safety.

Already, many people in the Chinese community which I represent feel that the equity and inclusive education strategy is too sexualized. The equity curriculum in part 2 of Bill 13 promotes teaching the disputed concept of “gender fluidity” as early as kindergarten. Bill 13 is narrowly focused on students who are bullied over gender identity issues.

The reason why we have trustees is to represent parents and give them a voice. To a certain extent, this government power grab will make trustees irrelevant.

The Chair (Mr. Ernie Hardeman): Excuse me. Could you move just a little back from the mike? Hansard is having a little trouble getting all the words.

Mr. Allan Tam: Okay.

It makes it impossible for trustees to fully and properly represent the people who elected them.

With clause 2(1) in Bill 13, it makes it even harder for local parents and trustees to express their concerns and values because the minister can easily override the trustees and rewrite the equity policy however she or he wants. This whittles away our democracy and should be resisted by we the people.

While we as Chinese Canadians oppose bullying of all kinds, introducing Bill 13, which ignores the majority of bullying, is not equitable.

Bill 14 is a better bill because it focuses on teaching that bullying of anyone is wrong and does not mandate an equity policy. We ask that you pass Bill 14 without delay.

Thank you for having me. I'll turn it over to Anita.

Ms. Anita Fung: Good afternoon, Mr. Chairman and all the MPPs. My name is Anita Fung. The MPP of my riding is the Honourable Michael Chan. I vote for Bill 14 and vote against Bill 13. The reason? Well, there are a lot of reasons; I'll just mention some.

Bill 13, paragraph 29.1, requires boards “to develop and implement an equity and inclusive education policy, and, if required by the minister, submit the policy to the minister and implement changes to the policy as directed by the minister....” The result of this requirement to the board makes me scared and worried.

A document named Challenging Homophobia and Heterosexism: A K-12 Curriculum Resource Guide, 2011, was developed by the Toronto District School Board to implement an equity and inclusive education policy. On page 10 of the resource guide, it says that no permission slips will be sent home before starting class work on LGBTQ issues. This means that I, as a mother—that my right and responsibility to protect my child has been taken away by the education system of Ontario. I repeat: My right and responsibility to protect my child has been taken away. It's intolerable here.

Ladies and gentlemen, do you understand what I'm saying? As a parent, to protect my kids is an instinct. It's the parents' right to protect children; it's not given by the lawmakers. No one, including lawmakers of the government or of any kind, can pass any law—even named as a human right—that can take away my right to protect my child. The role of government is to provide services and tools to support parents to protect their children. We, as parents, pay tax to the government to enforce child protection programs and set up an education system to help children grow. So please understand that we, as parents, won't give up the fight to keep the right to protect our children.

We understand that parents are responsible for their children's actions. When children are unable to make decisions due to their lack of knowledge and experience, it's the parents' responsibility to choose what they think is best for their children. How can there be a law or legislation where parents are not allowed to choose for their children? If parents are not allowed to intervene in the children's learning, will they continue to be responsible for their actions? Will the school boards, under the Bill 13 policy, now be responsible for every kind of behaviour of children?

In the document A Parent Engagement Policy for Ontario Schools, 2010, it says that it recognizes and supports the important role parents have in contributing to their children's learning at home and at school. It also identifies strategies to remove barriers to parent involvement. According to this policy, parents are encouraged to be actively involved in their children's learning, and educators are to do their best to remove any kind of communication blockages. How is it possible, then, that there is a curriculum such as the one proposed by the TDSB, where parents are not allowed to be informed of and involved in their children's learning?

The TDSB's Challenging Homophobia and Heterosexism curriculum clearly violates the education policy of Ontario, where parents should be informed of their children's learning at all times. Now, I want to ask the Honourable Laurel Broten, the Minister of Education: Will this curriculum be the standard curriculum that is

required to be implemented by all Toronto school boards?

Since it violates the education policy of Ontario, I request that this curriculum be taken out, along with Bill 13, which requires the school boards to develop and implement such policies and curriculum.

In conclusion, I support Bill 14 as it does not require the school board to develop a curriculum and policies without the parents' consent. Keep in mind that we, as parents, are more passionate about our children than anyone else in the world. Protecting our children is an inherited right, and we'll fight to the end if that is taken away from us.

Ladies and gentlemen, I'm not just talking about my own opinion. I was a teacher before I came here, and I have been working with students and parents all these years since I came here. I'm talking on behalf of all the parents I've talked to. We want to share our hearts with you. We are not interested in politics. What we care most about is the education of our children. We feel that the consequences of passing Bill 13 will bring confusion about gender identity and sex orientation to our children at a very young age, and we cannot help our children because our right has been taken away.

Ladies and gentlemen, can you read our hearts as parents? Do you read our worries and our deep concerns? We welcome an anti-bullying act which does not bring up any controversies, like Bill 14. So all MPPs: You're elected to represent our voice and vote on our behalf. Please listen to us and understand our concerns. Thank you very much.

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The Chair (Mr. Ernie Hardeman): Thank you very much for your presentation. That does conclude the 15 minutes for your presentation, so we thank you again for coming in.

MS. MIRTHA CORONEL

MS. AMINA JAMA

The Chair (Mr. Ernie Hardeman): Our next delegation is Mirtha Coronel and Amina Jama.

Ms. Mirtha Coronel: Good afternoon.

The Chair (Mr. Ernie Hardeman): Thank you very much. If, in starting the presentation, you do as the others, we have 15 minutes. That means one more minute when you get near the end, if you're not complete at that point. And before you start with your presentation, if you would just give your name and the other names so that Hansard knows who's speaking at the time.

Ms. Mirtha Coronel: Good afternoon. My name is Mirtha Coronel, and with me today is Amina Jama.

I'm a mother of three children. I'm also a merchandise buyer at Sears Canada. I'm currently on maternity leave, as you can appreciate, with my third child. I was born and raised in Etobicoke and I am a resident of the greater Toronto area.

As a resident of the city of Toronto, the province of Ontario and this beautiful nation of Canada, I am thankful and feel privileged to be living in a democratic society that allows me to stand before you, the elected provincial officials, today.

Bullying is a very serious matter. I understand it firsthand, as I, as a child, was on both sides of this issue, as a bully and as one who was bullied. Although understanding the reasons for bullying are complex in nature, and on the surface may vary from case to case, I have no doubt in my heart that the root of it all is a lack of love. Whether it be a lack of love from parents toward their children or children toward their parents, or a lack of love for oneself, it is a very basic essence that is missing in our society today.

So I come before you asking that you genuinely consider how you, as elected officials, can really help eliminate the issue of bullying from within our schools. I ask that you set party political agendas aside and do what is right to uphold truth to the issue of bullying. Specifically, I would like to consider a couple of key elements from both Bill 13 and Bill 14.

First, Bill 13: The Accepting Schools Act is an act to amend the Education Act. It sets out to make schools more equitable and inclusive by very clearly segregating a specific group of people; namely, people who have same-sex attraction, as stated in the bill's preamble. It goes on to state that "students need to be equipped with the knowledge, skills, attitude and values to engage ... others critically...." It states that a "whole-school approach" must be taken; that is, "everyone—government, educators, school staff, parents, students and the wider community—has a role to play" in this.

Paragraph 2 of the bill states that paragraph 29.1 of subsection 8(1) of the act should read: "Require boards to develop and implement an equity and inclusive education policy, and, if required by the minister, submit the policy to the minister and implement changes to the policy as directed by the minister," meaning that every board would have to implement this.

Here is where my concern lies: You see, we in Toronto have an equitable and inclusive curriculum. The resource guide is called Challenging Homophobia and Heterosexism, a kindergarten-to-grade 12 curriculum guide. This resource guide is laden with elements that blatantly challenge my role as a parent and aims to eliminate my parental rights and religious freedoms—ones that are protected under the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. This is unacceptable.

Page 10 of the curriculum clearly states that there is no opting out or any accommodations of any kind if they contradict the religious beliefs of the pupil or the teacher. Further, it goes on to teach sex ed as early as kindergarten, when my children need to focus on learning their ABCs and their 123s.

In essence, the Accepting Schools Act is not accepting of parental rights or cultural or religious freedoms. By its mere definition it is, in and of itself, positioned to bully parents, teachers, and students of various ethnic, cultural and religious beliefs who are not of like mind.

So I ask you to consider: What benefit to the students and teachers and parents and society at large will such a bill as Bill 13 bring?

Bill 13 goes on to amend section 301 of the act by requiring third party users of schools operated by the board to include in the agreement that the person or entity follows standards that are consistent with the code of conduct. I'm not fully aware what this means because I haven't actually seen what the code of conduct looks like, but it seems to me that this sets up for these third party users to have to be equity and inclusive. Many religious groups use school property outside of regular school hours. The government should not be permitted to impose their own agenda on these various groups.

My last main concern with Bill 13 is paragraph 9 of the bill, which requires an amendment to section 303.1 of the act and imposes on every board the requirement to support pupils who want to lead and establish "activities or organizations that promote gender equity"—that's their point (a); and their point (d) is "activities or organizations that promote the awareness and understanding of, and respect for, people of all sexual orientations and gender identities, including organizations with the name gay-straight alliance or another name."

My concern with this is that the province of Ontario supports the public school board and the Catholic school board. When the province stepped in to help the Catholic school board, they did so with the understanding that there was a need for this board to even be in existence and that this board had values that were established and are established and rooted in the word of God and the traditions that follow it.

It is a concern that at this point in time the government would target this board by attacking its very foundation on account of its having traditional moral values. This attack by the government was very evident in statements made by the Minister of Education, Laurel Broten, when refusing to accept the Catholic Church's accepting differences document. For the record, I'm not Catholic. I'm just saying; not that it matters.

As for Bill 14, it is truly an anti-bullying bill, as illustrated in the preamble, whereby it gives a crystal-clear definition of bullying and encompasses all bullied people and bullies without highlighting any specific group. Section 2(1): Subsection 1(1) of the Education Act would be amended as follows: It would define "bullying" and state that:

"'bullying' means the severe or repeated use by one or more pupils of a written, verbal, electronic or other form of expression, a physical act or gesture or any combination of them if it is directed at another pupil and if it has the effect of or is reasonably intended to have the effect of,

"(a) causing physical or emotional harm to the other pupil or damage to the other pupil's property,

"(b) placing the other pupil in reasonable fear of harm to himself or herself or damage to his or her property,

"(c) creating a hostile environment at school for the other pupil,

"(d) infringing on the legal rights of the other pupil at school, or

"(e) materially and substantially disrupting the education process or the orderly operation of a school," otherwise described as "intimidation."

The act also encompasses cyberbullying, which is a modern form of bullying, and bullying in schools and the parameters that would define what "the school" means.

Based on the all-encompassing and thorough Bill 14, it is my desire to see Bill 13 removed from the table and Bill 14 brought forth as the one bill that by its very nature addresses all the main anti-bullying points in Bill 13 without highlighting any specific group and without eliminating others and without promoting a political agenda aimed to re-engineer society at large.

Let us teach each other to love and respect one another through a bill that treats everyone equally. For the sake of the voiceless in this generation and in the generations to come, I urge you to say no to Bill 13.

The Chair (Mr. Ernie Hardeman): Thank you very much.

If I could just take a minute and tell the audience that there is room in 151 around the corner. You can sit down and you can watch it on the TV screens. We have to be a little cautious about the door and people being able to get in and out, in case somebody has to get in or we have to quickly get out.

Back to you.

1510

Ms. Amina Jama: Good afternoon. My name is Amina Jama, and I'm a mother of three. I don't hold any job; I'm a homemaker. I was introduced to Bill 13 through my friend. I never knew her—I just met her somewhere and she told me about it, and I was very surprised when I read Bill 13. A lot of people do not know about it.

I just have a simple thing to say: Let me be a parent. Let me do my job. I am a mom. I know how to raise my kid. I will teach her what is right from wrong, and I am against any bullying, period. I don't care what you are, whether you're black, white, brown, blue, who you are; I am against any bullying. I, a mom, will teach my child what to do and what not to do.

Let the school be a school environment. I do not support Bill 13 and I do support Bill 14. I am not affiliated with any religious or any specific group. I just want my voice to be heard that I do not support Bill 13.

The Chair (Mr. Ernie Hardeman): Thank you very much. We have about three minutes left. The government party.

Mr. Bob Delaney: Yes, a question: Will you please explain the link between the Toronto District School Board document that you're reading from and the Accepting Schools Act?

Ms. Mirtha Coronel: Yes. In 2009, the Ontario government put out a document which I didn't reference in my presentation but it's called—just give me a second—Equity and Inclusive Education in Ontario Schools: Guidelines for Policy Development and Implementa-

tion—Realizing the Promise of Diversity. The link is essentially this document. I have a copy of it here if you want to see it. From this document, the Toronto District School Board established the equity and inclusive curriculum. That's the link between the two. So though Bill 13 doesn't call out the Toronto District School Board curriculum, by the mere language that's used where it says that every board shall have an equity and inclusive—whatever it is, because there are several elements that every board shall have in order to create an equity and inclusive environment according to Bill 13. That's what the link is.

Mr. Bob Delaney: As we are not debating that bill, would you please tell me which section of Bill 13 affects curriculum in the province of Ontario?

Ms. Mirtha Coronel: Which section of Bill 13?

Mr. Bob Delaney: Bill 13.

Ms. Mirtha Coronel: I believe the bill in its entirety affects the curriculum, beginning right from its preamble, and I'm going to read from the preamble if that's what you want to hear. Or is there a specific paragraph that you want me to refer to? Because there are several; they're highlighted here.

Mr. Bob Delaney: If you feel that a part of Bill 13 is prescriptive of the curriculum in Ontario schools, I'd just like you to put into the record which sections you feel dictate curriculum.

Ms. Mirtha Coronel: Well, where it says, in the preamble, "Believe that students need to be equipped with the knowledge, skills, attitude and values to engage the world and others critically, which means developing a critical consciousness that allows them to take action on making their schools and communities more equitable and inclusive for all people, including LGBTTIQ"—and then it spells it out; and "Recognize that a whole-school approach is required, and that everyone—government, educators, school staff, parents, students and the wider community—has a role to play in creating a positive school climate and preventing inappropriate behaviour, such as bullying, sexual assault, gender-based violence and incidents based on homophobia." So it's saying that this is a belief and that everybody should have these values, and it recognizes that it's a whole-school approach, and the only way to take a whole-school approach is in a way to impact the curriculum.

Mr. Bob Delaney: That's how you're interpreting that it affects the curriculum?

Ms. Mirtha Coronel: I'm not a lawyer, but yes. I'm a mom.

Mr. Bob Delaney: Thank you.

The Chair (Mr. Ernie Hardeman): Thank you very much for your presentation. It's much appreciated. We thank you for taking the time to come in, all three of you.

MS. MARION KARASIUK

The Chair (Mr. Ernie Hardeman): Our next delegation is Marion—

Ms. Marion Karasiuk: Karasiuk.

The Chair (Mr. Ernie Hardeman): Welcome. As with the previous presenters, you have 15 minutes to make your presentation, and I would ask you to repeat your name for the Hansard so they'll have it properly.

Ms. Marion Karasiuk: My name is Marion Karasiuk.

The Chair (Mr. Ernie Hardeman): Thank you very much. The floor is yours.

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: Do we have the presentation?

The Chair (Mr. Ernie Hardeman): Is there a written presentation?

Ms. Marion Karasiuk: No, I have a one-page hand-out. I'll send it around at the end.

The Chair (Mr. Ernie Hardeman): Okay. Very good.

Ms. Marion Karasiuk: Mr. Chairman, staff, ladies and gentlemen of the committee, thank you for this opportunity to speak to you regarding the anti-bully bills that are before you. I'd also like to thank my own MPP, Cheri DiNovo, who took time in her office to see me and a friend two weeks ago regarding these same bills. Although we do not agree on everything, I have great respect for Cheri as a politician and a leader in our community of Parkdale–High Park.

As I said, my name is Marion Karasiuk. My background is, I'm an engineer. Out of university, I worked in my field for 12 years, but when my second child was born, I didn't return to work. Instead, I stayed at home and began to volunteer in the community. For example, over the last 11 years, I volunteer weekly at a food and clothing bank in my neighbourhood, and for a six-year period I volunteered in the federal women's prison in Cambridge.

In addition to these volunteer activities, I, as well as my husband, volunteered extensively in the various Toronto District School Board schools that our two children have attended over the past 15 years. I volunteered on dozens of field trips and recreational events. I've helped dozens of times in the classroom and on pizza lunches. I've organized fundraising and other events and have sat in on countless school council and school committee meetings over the years.

I am a Christian with traditional religious values. My faith and values call me to be a compassionate, principled person and to give my time and energy to the people in my life and the people in my community. Together, my husband and I have raised compassionate and principled children who also give their time and energy in the community. Last year, when my older daughter graduated from high school, she was the winner of the Lieutenant Governor's award for community volunteering.

As you know, parent involvement in children's education is an important indicator of student success. I believe that my and my husband's involvement in our children's school has contributed to our children's and their classmates' success as students and as young citizens of Ontario.

As a parent who has been actively involved in my children's education and schools, I'm here today to give you my perspective on the anti-bully bills that are before

you. I have read both Bill 13 and Bill 14 in their entirety. I want to recommend that the Parliament of Ontario vote yes to Bill 14 and no to Bill 13—details in a moment.

The short version is this: I support Bill 14 because it is impartial, dealing with bullying of anyone for any reason. It is flexible, recognizing that different schools have different mandates and recognizing the overall complexity of the bullying issue; and it is accountable, respecting parents and the electorate of Ontario by making the tracking and handling of all kinds of bullying incidents in publicly funded schools transparent. I do not believe Bill 13 has these characteristics, and so I do not support it.

Now the details: I support Bill 14 because it is impartial. It deals with bullying of anyone for any reason. It does not isolate specific causes and specific groups of people. Bill 13 singles out for special attention and support for specific groups. One of these is young people who identify in the LGBTTIQ categories that are listed in the preamble of the bill.

This special attention and support for this group will create an environment in Ontario schools where students and parents with traditional religious values are labeled and intimidated into silence; in other words, bullied with impunity.

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I know this will happen for two reasons. The first reason that I know it will happen is because I experienced it personally. Four years ago in my child's school, an alternative school which expects and even requires parents to be involved, I asked to be informed about what my child was being taught about the sensitive subjects of gender and sexual identities so that I as a parent would have the chance to help my child process those teachings. I acknowledged that many other parents do not have the same values as I do, and I respected them as parents of their children, but I asked to be respected as the parent of my child and to be given the chance to know what my child was being exposed to, so that we could talk it out at home. The end result of my daring to ask for this was a series of secret meetings held to decide how to deal with me, and then finally a very public parent meeting at which my request was summarily dismissed by the principal and I was labelled homophobic. When other parents also with traditional religious values saw how I was treated, they clammed right up. Isn't that the classic result of bullying? People are silenced; people clam up. They put their heads down and duck out.

As a result of this, I withdrew from a number of volunteer activities in the school. I felt I could not continue in roles that I had served in for years. I felt like a pariah. But the good news is that our family did not leave the school. We stayed involved at the level that we felt we could be involved and remained a part of the community. Again, because of my traditional religious values, I sought the way of forgiveness and staying in relationships through difficult times. It has been a long road, but after four years I have the courage to speak to you all about this because I do not want to see other parents bullied and silenced as they try, in good con-

science, with respect for others, to exercise their parental responsibilities in the raising of their children.

The second reason I know that students and parents with traditional religious values will be marginalized is because of what I see, sadly, in the public debate over Bill 13. Insulting language has been used to belittle and intimidate parents with traditional religious values by a provincial government minister, Glen Murray, and by a consultant that the government has used in connection with Bill 13, Dan Savage. If this is how the promoters of Bill 13 use their power to deal with persons with whom they disagree—that is, by bullying them—how is it that we expect our school environments to be safe from such abuses of power if we legislatively give certain voices supremacy over other voices?

Bullying of any kind is wrong. Bullying of any student for any reason in our schools should not be tolerated, and that is what Bill 14 is about, because it is impartial whereas Bill 13 is not.

Another reason I support Bill 14 is because it is flexible. In the formation of anti-bullying policy, Bill 14 respects that different schools have different mandates; for example, Catholic schools have a mandate to uphold Catholic moral and religious teachings. Many parents have specifically chosen these schools for this reason. Bill 14 also respects that different parts of different cities and the province at large have different rates of different kinds of bullying. Bill 13, on the other hand, enforces a one-size-fits-all policy and procedures and resources and training for all publicly funded Ontario schools.

Bill 13 also requires that all secondary schools permit the formation of student-led gay-straight alliance clubs. From the years that these clubs have been around in the United States, it's clear that they're not just clubs for kids who are experiencing bullying; they are clubs for actively promoting various sexual lifestyles. For Catholic high schools, requiring them to have GSAs means requiring those schools to endorse clubs that contradict Catholic teaching. This undermines their mandate as Catholic schools. The legacy of our pluralistic democracy in Canada is that respect for differing religious convictions has been present not just from Confederation but actually written into it.

Finally, I support Bill 14 because it is accountable. It respects parents and the electorate of Ontario. Consultation is sought from, and policies, plans and accountability reports are made available annually to, the public so that the handling of bullying in schools is transparent. Bill 13 has only internal accountability through school climate surveys. These have their place, but by themselves they take the parents and the Ontario electorate out of the equation for the school system we are funding and entrusting our children to.

In summary, Bill 14 takes the issue of bullying in schools seriously—all kinds of bullying—including but not limited to the bullying of young people who identify in the LGBTTIQ categories. Bill 14 does this in a way that is impartial, flexible and accountable and that respects parents' rights and responsibilities in the raising

of our children. On the other hand, I fear and I believe, with good reason, that the rights and voices of parents across Ontario in the education of their children will be overridden by the passing of Bill 13. Therefore, I encourage you to vote yes to Bill 14 and no to Bill 13.

I have a one-page handout. It is a letter that I sent by email to Cheri, and I copied all of you as members of the social policy committee. I'm just providing a hard copy for your convenience. Thank you for listening.

The Chair (Mr. Ernie Hardeman): Thank you very much for your presentation. That does conclude the 15 minutes. We thank you for the presentation. The clerk will pass out the letter you have given us, to ensure all committee members have it.

ALLIANCE FOR FAMILY VALUES

The Chair (Mr. Ernie Hardeman): Our next delegation is the Alliance for Family Values: Peter Chen, Jenny Kwan and Kenny Tsui.

Mr. Peter Chen: I have some documents.

The Chair (Mr. Ernie Hardeman): Thank you. The clerk will look after that. If you will sit at the front table there, you have 15 minutes to make your presentation. As we're drawing near the end, that means there's one minute left. As I said, you have 15 minutes to make it. If there's sufficient time afterwards, we will allow questions from the members of the committee. If not, we appreciate that, and we will consider everything that's presented as we review the two bills. With that, the floor is yours.

Mr. Peter Chen: Thank you. Good afternoon, Mr. Chair and members of the panel. May we congratulate you for helping Ontarians in public affairs and also paying so much attention to children's education? With this also in mind, our alliance has actually conducted a general opinion survey which hopefully would help our panels and members of the government to consider when deciding on Bill 13, Bill 14 or any bill which is related to anti-bullying.

You can see, actually, from the submission the essence of what we are going to say. The details of the survey will be in the survey report, which you probably have by now received. My colleagues here, Mr. Kenny Tsui, Mrs. Jenny Kwan and also Mr. Samuel Chan, will be giving you more qualitative aspects of the summary of our survey.

Our survey has been done in various—

The Chair (Mr. Ernie Hardeman): If I could just stop you for a moment: Could you please give your name, too, for the Hansard so we know everyone that's in the delegation?

1530

Mr. Peter Chen: Yes. I'm Peter Chen. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Our survey has been done, actually, on the Internet as well as on a few locations in Markham, Richmond Hill, Toronto, North York, Scarborough, and Mississauga as well. Of the 2,800 responses returned, we found that,

actually, the kind of results do not differ much whether they are religious or non-religious, or general public, so to say. That is also reflected from our surveys on the Internet.

With that, I will ask my colleagues to start presenting, firstly, some of the examples and the kind of feedback they've got from our public respondents. Then Mrs. Jenny Kwan will also be giving some specific examples, while Mr. Samuel Chan will give you concluding remarks, in points, as to what kind of things the public wants and hopes that the government will consider.

Mr. Kenny Tsui: Mr. Chair, officers and public Ontarians, my name is Kenny Tsui, speaking on behalf of the Alliance for Family Values to question and to oppose the Minister of Education on launching Bill 13, the Accepting Schools Act, 2012, to all school boards. Based on our recent statistics, survey report and the public's concern, people wonder whether there is an under-the-table agenda or purpose of our Minister of Education, who is so eager to enforce Bill 13 to all school boards. Would it be actually merely to promote homosexual and multi-gender sex activities to all Ontario students? Please do not try to mislead Ontarians to integrate the anti-bullying acts by means of this kind of Bill 13. Don't foolish around the public.

The Ontario Minister of Education should not impose Bill 13 by legislation on compliance to all public and Catholic schools. Eventually it will cause us unnecessary arguments and conflicts among the community. It will also cost extra education funds and will involve a lot of legal lawsuits from churches and from individual different families going through legal aid to contest the government in a series of cases up to a federal Supreme Court judgment.

At present, the Ontario government owes a huge deficit of over \$280 billion, and every 1% increase in interest rates will cost the province an additional \$500 million. Such kind of money could have paid for 12,000 first-year elementary teachers and to help a lot of extra-curricular activities like music or sports.

The major role of the Minister of Education is to provide the fundamental needs of Ontario students and to maintain the basic education, knowledge and technology applications of our students up to and above the average international standard of the same level of classes. At this time of the great shortage of money, the minister should assist our Premier to control the budget balance on every school board to ensure no overexpenses and to make sure that every dollar of the taxpayers is cost-effective, based on their education.

The best way to anti-bully is going through proper guidance to all students: by love, by care, by respect, by peace, by sympathy, by consideration, by sharing, by warranty and by help—this kind of moral education. For serious bullying, which is a criminal offence, there's the police who follow up; and for many cases, the teacher, the principal, the trustee, the parents are capable to deal with this and control and investigate and solve the problem.

Bill 13 does bully against a parent's choice, the school trustee's rights, the teacher's role, religious freedoms, conservative values, basic education principles, non-mature children's normal physiological and psychological development, and the respect of generally every culture. Bill 13 is surely not an urgent need, nor a basic education subject to young students at their fundamental studying period in kindergarten and primary levels.

The other unreasonable act is to neglect the parent's choice to exempt their children attending such kind of multi-gender sex education classes or activities. If Bill 13 passes through into law, the school trustees and the teachers will lose their rights and the decision to arrange for proper timing for releasing sexual orientation behaviour information to students in higher-level classes, for most educators do believe that gay-straight alliance concepts are not suitable for children at early ages, but it is good for high school students to understand the difference between traditional family values and multi-gender sex rights in the community.

It is too early to implement such concepts to non-mature students or children. This is a kind of brainwashing. The grade three students and kindergartens are too young and do not easily but with difficulty distinguish between good or bad, right or wrong, popular or inappropriate.

Usually the children will listen to the adult, and the adult's behaviour or activity may not be suitable for young people. We must be very, very careful. We cannot let the government make decisions on our children, to force them to choose, to accept, to support or understand gay-straight alliance activities at their early stage of life.

We have the rights to protect our children; besides, the freedom of choice of parents and for any individuals is also to be respected. The government has no right to enforce our children to accept such gay-straight alliance activities in school. We are not going to bias law to suppress or persecute homosexual and/or multi-gendered people. We want to have a fair choice on our own decision to accept or not to accept certain life behaviours for our children other than the basic moral and ethical training and general educational knowledge. Thank you.

Mr. Peter Chen: Next, our colleague would be Ms. Jenny Kwan.

As you can see in the survey results, over 90% of the respondents have very similar kinds of responses. Also, we cross-compare with various groups, religious, non-religious, general public, Internet public, and they have come to very similar conclusions. This is another qualitative example.

Ms. Jenny Kwan: Good afternoon, committee members. My name is Jenny Kwan. I'd just like to highlight some comments that we received from parents who participated in our survey. These comments were received from those who actually participated in the survey and actually wrote comments on the sheet.

One says, "Bill 13 would make children get awful mental health. It is too terrible!"

Another one says, "Parents' rights should be respected."

"This Bill 13 is ridiculous."

"Bill 13 will result in confusion of children's thinking and create an unhealthy mental state."

There were some other comments on the Internet that were also from parents who are concerned about Bill 13. One parent stated she does not want her children to be taught there are seven different genders. She also said she does not want her children taught that a person's gender is not connected to their physical anatomy, meaning boys can become girls or girls can become boys.

"Bill 13 is more about changing social views on human sexuality than bullying."

Finally, "Many young people are bullied for no particular reason." For example, they may be bullied for "the way they talk, the way they dress, the way they look, their size or even their name. In fact, the number one cause of bullying is body shape and image."

Thank you.

Mr. Samuel Chan: Good afternoon. My name is Samuel Chan. The following are the result findings of the survey. The results and analyses suggest that the responses are consistent across the different sources, general public or religious. Respondents from the general public and the religious have similar responses for the questions. Bill 13 is a serious concern for all. People are very concerned as regards the major measures proposed in Bill 13 and the approach that is used to legislate Bill 13.

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The data shows that an overwhelming majority—mostly over 90%—of the respondents expressed their opinions that: (1) they're opposed to passing Bill 13; (2) schools should not educate four-year-olds or very young children in sexual knowledge; (3) schools should not ask grade 3 elementary school students to participate in gay pride parades for anti-bullying purposes; (4) schools should not have gay-straight alliances; (5) their MPP did not consult them with regard to Bill 13; and (6) Bill 13 should be decided by a referendum.

According to the above opinions of the vast majority, it is recommended, therefore, that the government should take into consideration the following:

(1) There should be an equity policy for deciding on the contents and measures in the bill for the protection of all students from bullying-motivated prejudice or hate on race, national or ethnic origin, language, colour, religion, sex, age, mental or physical disability, sexual orientation, or any other similar factor; and this should be reflected in the bill's balance in contents, measures and approaches for each and every of the above-mentioned student groups, based on race, ethnic origin, disability, religion etc.

(2) The bill should not require schools to have measures, activities, programs and organizations that are against the will of the vast majority in Ontario, like gay-straight alliances, the implementation of policies that requires sex education for students at a very early age, and requiring students to participate in in-school gay pride parades.

(3) There should be activities or organizations that better promote the understanding of and respect for

people through other aspects that are proven to be more effective for anti-bullying, such as the education programs in and promotion of traditional family values that encourage self-respect, mutual respect, benevolence and agape.

(4) The decision on Bill 13 should not be made in haste, without letting all people be aware of this bill and participate in the democratic decision-making process.

(5) There should be an extended, widely publicized and extensive public consultation for the general public in every constituency, by the MPPs, on Bill 13 before the legislative decision process further proceeds for the bill.

(6) The fate of Bill 13, after extensive public consultation, should be decided democratically by the people of Ontario through referendum.

Thank you.

The Chair (Mr. Ernie Hardeman): I was just going to say, anything beyond (7), we would ask for that in writing, because our time is up. Thank you very much for your presentation. We appreciate your coming forward.

Mr. Peter Chen: Thank you very much, members of the panel.

MR. KAM WAI PANG

The Chair (Mr. Ernie Hardeman): Our next delegation is Kam Wai Pang. Thank you very much, sir, for coming in to make a presentation. As with the previous—I think you were present as we gave directions; it's a 15-minute presentation. That means there's one minute left. If there is sufficient time at the end of your presentation we will allocate that for questions from the committee. If not, we thank you very much for the 15-minute presentation. The floor is yours.

Mr. Kam Wai Pang: Thank you, Chair. Thank you all, committee. Have a very good afternoon today. May I request that if the information left—because there are names and signatures there, just keep it here, okay?

Thanks for giving me this chance to present what I have to say about Bill 13 and Bill 14.

I think no one would disagree that a bill for anti-bully is great bill. I was full of hope when I heard that the Liberal government's Bill 13 deals with anti-bully. Though I won't say students will be completely free of bullying after the bill, I can imagine that my children and children of my friends, my family or any other children will be safer in their school environment.

Unfortunately, when I took a closer look on Bill 13, I found many contents of the bill do not reflect the nature of the bill, rather using it as a flag to privilege certain people groups. Since my time is limited, I'll try to point out a couple of issues that I noticed and feel very uncomfortable about. The issue is that the government says what they want to do but in fact they are doing the opposite. My point will be talking about equity and inclusivity.

The first issue I'd like to point out is about equity. According to the definitions by the Ministry of Education's 2009 Equity and Inclusive Education in Ontario

Schools: Guidelines for Policy Development and Implementation, equity is "A condition or state of fair, inclusive, and respectful treatment for all people. Equity does not mean treating people the same without regard for individual differences."

This definition is great, but the content in the bill is going in the opposite direction.

Example 1: In the preamble, the fourth "Believe" says, "Believe that students need to be equipped with the knowledge, skills, attitude and values to engage the world and others critically, which means developing a critical consciousness that allows them to take action on making their schools and communities more equitable and inclusive for all people, including LGBTTIQ (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgendered, transsexual, two-spirited, intersexed, queer and questioning) people."

This statement is neither fair nor inclusive. No other people groups are mentioned; only LGBTTIQ is highlighted. If the government thinks that there are too many people groups to be listed, why list sexual orientation groups only?

Does the Liberal government think that LGBTTIQ is not included in the so-called "all people" in the statement, that they have to be highlighted as "other people" that are not in "all people"? Or do they think that LGBTTIQ has the privilege to be highlighted over other people groups? Or do they believe that LGBTTIQ are the only victims in equity?

Example 2: In section 9 it says that "The act is amended by adding the following section:

"Board support for certain pupil activities and organizations

"303.1 Every board shall support pupils who want to establish and lead,

"(a) activities or organizations that promote gender equity;

"(b) activities or organizations that promote anti-racism;

"(c) activities or organizations that promote the awareness and understanding of, and respect for, people with disabilities; or

"(d) activities or organizations that promote the awareness and understanding of, and respect for, people of all sexual orientations and gender identities, including organizations with the name gay-straight alliance or another name."

It is so obvious that in point (d), when mentioned about sexual orientation and gender identities, the description is worth more detail, more specifics and more instruction compared to points (a) to (c) in the same paragraph for the other people groups.

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(2) The bill specifically mentioned "gay-straight alliance or another name," which is a very unusual instruction compared to the previous people groups described.

(3) Also, should a bill give direction? Why go into the specific nature—even giving the names of specific groups—of certain activities/organizations? This makes me and some of my friends and family suspicious that the

Liberal government is trying to give more privileges and bias to certain groups of people. This is not fair, not inclusive and is against equity.

(4) For example, in a big family with many children, they love each other, but sometimes they fight. They share equal amounts of candies and snacks. But one day, the parents or the guardians decide to give some of the kids more candies and snacks than the others. What do you think will happen? Yes; conflicts, conflicts of interest. Bill 13 is neither protecting nor harmonizing, but creating conflicts between students.

(5) When Bill 13 has highlighted certain people groups, the other groups seem to be for decoration and justification for the bill to carry out the so-called EIE—but actually benefits certain groups only. This is not anti-bully; this is not equity; this is bias and discrimination.

Example 3, the first fruit of Bill 13: TDSB policy. Following the instructions of the Liberal government, the TDSB published a 220-page resource guide called *Challenging Homophobia and Heterosexism: A K-12 Curriculum Resource Guide*. This book is the most detailed resource guide I could find in the TDSB. Most of the other resource books I found in the TDSB are less than 20 pages. So this one is 10 times more. If we agree that supplying more resources implies providing more privileges, this practice obviously provides more privileges to certain groups of students over the others.

An anti-bullying bill should treat all students equally and not privilege certain special interest groups above others. This is completely against the meaning of equity stated by Equity and Inclusive Education in Ontario Schools.

If what I heard is true, there was an MPP who suggested that the funding for GSAs can be taken from the EQAO. If this is true, this is just like the family with many children: Not only do some of them have more candies and snacks, but the candies and snacks are taken from the other children. This is completely against the spirit of equity. This is deprivation.

Example 4: Daycare centres have to be closed down. When I talked about Bill 13 with some of my friends, I heard that some daycare centres have to be closed in 2014 because they don't want to put certain sexual orientation books and promotional materials in their school, under the light of the Liberal government's EIE policy, which Bill 13 is trying hard to implement in 2(1), paragraph 29.1. The government will remove their subsidy because of that. However, I've never heard of any education institutes losing their subsidy or their licence because they don't put ethnic or religious material in their schools. Is this equity for all people groups—as mentioned, “fair, inclusive, and respectful treatment of all people”? No.

The second issue I would like to point out is inclusivity. In the same definitions by the Ontario education—inclusive education is based on the principle of acceptance and inclusion of all students. Students see themselves reflected in their curriculum, their physical surroundings and the broader environment, in which diversity is honoured and all individuals are respected.

As I have said, the definition is great, but going into practice, the fact is, according to the TDSB website—there is a page called Facts and Statistics posted on their website, which I believe they posted according to their own preferences because they select some, but not all or most other, facts and statistics. I find that out of the many statistics, the Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics report Hate Crime in Canada should be the most subjective source comparatively. Unfortunately, as I've mentioned, the TDSB selected info that they want to promote, but it's not the full facts. They mentioned, “Sexual orientation was one of the top three motivations for hate crimes.” This is true, but they intentionally exclude the top two in their inclusivity, which are race or ethnicity, and religiously motivated hate crimes. In the report that they quote, the total number of cases of racial hate crime in 2006 was 502, and religion was 220; sexual orientation was 80. That is six times or three times more than sexual orientation.

I don't see any of the top two issues included in the so detailed instructions of Bill 13. Not only didn't the top two get proper attention; the other victim groups that they list in Bill 13 are unfortunately being included briefly in decoration to support the point “d” group of people with a lot of detail and descriptions. This makes an impression that the “d” group should be treated with more respect, in line 303.1.

In addition, if GSAs can be introduced into our schools with funding and support from schools and school boards, why not the other groups? Why not include the other groups in Bill 13, initiated by the people, like race, religion, whatever? Only four groups of students are included in 303.1. Are the rest excluded? We cannot possibly include every possible group who may be bullied, like myself, who was bullied when I was in my school age. My conclusion on Bill 13 is, the so-called Accepting Schools Act is not accepting at all.

So I add one more sentence on Bill 14. All the problems I can see in Bill 13, I cannot find in Bill 14. I'm not a good amender like the previous speakers, presenters, but I'm a shopper; I know how to shop. When I see good things, I do a shopping. I cannot make adjustments, but I know how to shop.

Thank you very much.

The Chair (Mr. Ernie Hardeman): Thank you very much for your presentation. That does conclude the 15 minutes, so we thank you again for your presentation.

CANADIAN HINDU ADVOCACY

The Chair (Mr. Ernie Hardeman): Our next presenter is the Canadian Hindu Advocacy, Ron Banerjee, director. Thank you and welcome. As in the previous delegations—I believe you were present when we introduced the last one—it's a 15-minute presentation. If there's sufficient time left at the end of it for questions, we will have the committee ask questions. If not, I'll thank you again for coming in.

Mr. Ron Banerjee: Thank you for having me here.

The Canadian Hindu Advocacy is a representative of the Canadian Hindu community here in Canada, where there are about a half-million of us. We have some issues and problems with these bills. There are many reasons why we have issues with them.

One of the issues that we have is that we actually believe that these bills are going to backfire. Far from lessening hatred or discrimination against gays and homosexuals, we actually believe that it will increase hatred against these particular groups, and I will explain why.

The Canadian Hindu community is in many ways the most bullied and the most discriminated-against group in Canada. There are many examples of this. An Air India jet in the 1980s was blown up by suspected Sikh terrorists. The police discriminated against the Hindu community, did not find the guilty people, and really didn't seem to care very much about the case of those 330, mostly Hindus, that were killed.

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After 9/11, a Hindu temple in Hamilton, Ontario, was burned to the ground by unknown personalities. The police were not able to find who did it, and they didn't make sufficient efforts as well, in our opinion.

So we know about bullying; that's what I'm trying to say here. Nobody really can lecture us or teach us about bullying and discrimination. But you know what? We know that there's a right way to fight against bullying and there's a wrong way to do it.

These bills that are on the table here, they indicate that we should approach bullying in a manner, in a methodology, that's somewhat similar to the way, for example, that the Toronto District School Board approaches the issue of bullying. We know from experience that the Toronto District School Board is absolutely the wrong school board, the wrong example to use, absolutely the wrong people to follow when it comes to issues of bullying. This is the organization, the Toronto District School Board, that, in the name of increasing understanding towards the Muslim community, allows gender apartheid in the Islamic prayers within their school systems. These guys, the Toronto District School Board, they're actually promoting oppression against Islamic Muslim women within their school system. So who exactly are these people as a model to follow in terms of how to reduce oppression or hatred or discrimination?

We actually have concerns, and we have specific reasons why these bills will increase prejudice against homosexuals. When Hindu students are bullied in the schools, here is what we, the Hindu community, and we at the Canadian Hindu Advocacy do not do, and we never will do this: When a Hindu student is bullied in school, we do not go to the school and we do not ask or demand that the teachers within that school lessen the bullying against Hindus by demanding that the teachers within the school system teach our holy texts to other students or quote from our holy books, the Vedas. We do not ask students to dress up in Hindu outfits and pretend to be Hindus for a day.

Now, we are dedicated to fighting against oppression against the Hindu community, so you can ask, why don't we ask for this? Why do we not go to the school boards and demand that they take this type of action? Because we know what the result of that will be. The result will be B-A-C-K-L-A-S-H, backlash. If we take people of other religious faiths and preach our religious texts to them, or if we encourage them to dress up as Hindus and pretend to be Hindus for a day, what will happen is that these kids will go home and they will tell their parents, who may be of other religions or other faiths, "Look what these teachers are making us do in school." What will that do? That will actually increase dislike and hatred against the Hindu community.

The Toronto District School Board, if you look at their manuals, their suggestions, they want playacting. They suggest that perhaps two boys in a school can get up and can maybe act out a little skit, do a little play. Let's get them to pretend that they are gay and let's have them act out a little scene on stage. These are the kinds of non-sensical suggestions that the Toronto District School Board has. This is the sort of thing that will not work. It absolutely will not work.

Just imagine what will happen if this type of bill is put into place. The students will go home and they'll say, "Mommy, Daddy, guess what we did in school today? Guess what the teachers had us do in school today?" You know what that's going to do? That's going to increase the discrimination. That's going to increase the dislike against homosexuals and the gay community in society as a whole. It's actually the worst thing that could possibly happen to the gay community, and this is one of the reasons that we oppose it.

The way to fight bullying and discrimination is to simply tell people, "Look, there are people with different religions, different faiths, different skin colours, different sexual orientations in the school system. They're allowed to have those orientations. Don't bully them; don't harass them; don't bug them. If you do bully them, harass them or bug them, we'll come down on you. We will penalize you for doing that." That's the right way to do it.

But it's absolutely not necessary to get them to play-act and go up and pretend and to give people intimate details, fine-grained details about—"Well, what exactly is homosexuality? What does it involve?" "Well, this is what homosexuals do." We don't need to know those details; we just need to know that they have a slightly different orientation, a different sexual orientation. Don't harass them for that.

So there's a difference. A lot of people don't understand the difference. There's a difference between reducing violence, reducing bullying, reducing oppression by simply giving a broad message of, "Don't oppress people," versus trying to either brainwash people or to give an excessive level of detail, which is not necessary, about those particular lifestyles or a particular religion or a particular faith. We don't need to know all that; we really don't.

That is where the Canadian Hindu Advocacy stands. We have consulted on this issue. We have been to many

of the temples in the GTA, in the Toronto area, and it is the unanimous view, unanimous opinion, of our community that we are against bullying; we are against all forms of oppression. But there's a right way to fight it and there's a wrong way to fight it, and these bills are definitively the wrong way to do so. Thank you.

The Chair (Mr. Ernie Hardeman): Thank you very much for your presentation. We do have about three minutes left. I think it was you last time—yes.

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: Thanks very much for attending the committee. We have no further questions for you.

The Chair (Mr. Ernie Hardeman): Do you have anything that you would like to ask?

Ms. Cheri DiNovo: I'm just interested. I'm a United Church minister—that's my other job, other than being an MPP—and for our confirmation class, we were delighted to take our children to a Hindu temple. Actually, they did dress up in saris, and they did study some of the texts, in fact not just of Hinduism but of Islam, of Judaism and of other religions; and certainly in the school, as part of their world religions class, they also did that. Would you see that as a negative?

Mr. Ron Banerjee: Not necessarily. If you have a world religions class or a class in comparative religions or something that's related to that issue, within the context of the class, that could be part of a class assignment certainly, but not as part of a generic anti-bullying program which applies to everyone regardless of whether they're taking that particular course or that particular class or not. There's a difference between the two.

Ms. Cheri DiNovo: This Bill 13, I would also ask—and it has been asked before—I'm reading through the bill, and I don't see where it has specific requirements for curriculum. So is there a particular place in the bill that deals with curriculum that you object to?

Mr. Ron Banerjee: Well, we object in general to—we haven't really gone through the bill with a fine-tooth comb, but we certainly object to the portions that refer to some of the actions that are taken within the TDSB as an example to follow. So we would certainly object to those types of—the general tone and the general tenor of the bill appears to be oriented towards teaching people about the intricate details of gay and homosexual and other lifestyles, as opposed to a generic broad-brush statement of opposing bullying, and it tends to single out—you create a lot of problems in that sense, because if you are tailoring a bill around a particular community, other communities, like the Chinese gentleman who just spoke before me—I don't know his name—may quite rightly object that—why that particular community. Why isn't every single community being given an equal amount of attention—we have perhaps over 100 ethnicities and communities here in Ontario; we're very diverse here—so you don't create problems on that end.

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The Chair (Mr. Ernie Hardeman): Okay, thank you very much. That concludes your presentation, and we thank you very much for coming forward.

Mr. Bob Delaney: Do we have any time for questions?

The Chair (Mr. Ernie Hardeman): No. No, they're all gone. You're next. Time's up.

Mr. Bob Delaney: Well, I have five minutes left.

Interjection.

The Chair (Mr. Ernie Hardeman): Yes, it is.

TORONTO CHINESE CATHOLIC TASK FORCE

The Chair (Mr. Ernie Hardeman): The next one is the Toronto Chinese Catholic Task Force: David Kong, co-ordinator, and Sam Hundall. Welcome, and—

Mr. David Kong: I have some copies of my presentation here.

The Chair (Mr. Ernie Hardeman): Okay, the clerk will distribute those. As with the previous presenters, you will have 15 minutes to make your presentation. If there's sufficient time left for questions, we will start the next round of questions with the government side of the committee, and if not, then we'll go on to the next presentation. Thank you very much for coming in, and the floor is yours.

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: You can go ahead.

Mr. David Kong: I can start any time?

The Chair (Mr. Ernie Hardeman): Introduce yourself first.

Mr. David Kong: Okay. Thank you. Good afternoon, Chair, honourable members of the committee. I'm appearing on behalf of the TCCT, Toronto Chinese Catholic Task Force. This is a Catholic ministry, serving Chinese Catholics in the GTA area. I'm honoured to be given this opportunity to present our understanding of TCCT's responses to Bill 13 and to make a few suggestions to the committee—

The Acting Chair (Mrs. Jane McKenna): Excuse me, could you just say your name?

Mr. David Kong: Okay. My name is David Kong.

The Acting Chair (Mrs. Jane McKenna): Thank you.

Mr. David Kong: I'm delighted to be given this opportunity to present our understanding of TCCT's responses to Bill 13 and to make a few suggestions to the committee concerning the bill.

(1) Mandatory gay-straight alliance clubs: The purpose of the bill, to help “all students should feel safe at school and deserve a positive school climate that is inclusive and accepting, regardless of race, ancestry, place of origin, colour, ethnic origin, citizenship, creed, sex, sexual orientation, age, marital status, family status or disability,” is understandable.

However, section 9, “Board support for certain pupil activities and organizations,” gives emphasis to identify four student organizations; namely, they are to promote gender equity and anti-racism; gay-straight alliances; and raise awareness for people with disabilities. These four specific groups will certainly receive board-endorsed special status. But why do some activities or organiza-

tions receive board support and not others? This section can be interpreted as, “All men are equal, but some are more equal than others.” It also violates the purpose of the bill, and it lacks sensitivity of faith-based schools that cannot host gay-straight alliances.

This is our suggestion number 1: School boards are encouraged to provide and promote opportunities to form their anti-bullying clubs reflect schools’ and communities’ beliefs and cultures in schools.

(2) Unexpected consequences: Bill 13 places on “incidents based on homophobia” without defining the term “homophobia”—see the preamble and sections 4 and 7. And who sets the standard and measures of homophobia? No one. Further, Bill 13 seeks to institute tougher penalties for bullies, including expulsion. As a result, the bill could cause the self-identified gay students to become “untouchable,” since most reasonable students may try to avoid being captured by the vague language “homophobia.”

It does not mean that bullying students on any basis should be permitted. No, this is not our intention. But take the character of today’s students into consideration. The ambiguous language has been harshly criticized.

This is our suggestion number 2: Remove the ambiguous language “homophobia” in Bill 13 that may capture behaviours that are not bullying behaviours.

(3) Expected consequences: The purpose of the bill is laudable. The approach adopted lacks sensitivity and a consideration of the proper application of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. This bill, Bill 13, sets a new, lower standard for respect of Ontario citizens’ constitutional rights to religious and associational freedoms and parental authority—it’s on the other side of the page. Bill 13, if passed without the necessary amendments—we share the opinions of others that it will ensure years of costly, taxpayer-funded litigation as parents and schools fight to reclaim their rights.

This is our suggestion number 3: Make necessary amendments, as a piece of legislation should, but not a political statement about gay rights.

On the presentation page, you can see what I talked about in Bill 13. Now I’m talking about what are the litigations, what are the rights, what are the acts our group may reply to. In Bill 13, most of the people, including our group, can see Bill 13 is an anti-bullying bill, but not only. It’s a promoting of some of the lifestyles we may not agree with. We embrace people from all walks of life, but we may not agree with the other party’s life.

Also, we need only one bill, one act. This must be an anti-bullying bill only. We’d like to have all the MPPs, all the members, pass Bill 14 without any delay, because in Bill 14 we can see it tells how, why and what to embrace. We have to tolerate the other party’s behaviour, but it doesn’t mean we have to agree with them.

Also, in metro Toronto, in the greater Toronto area, people are coming from all walks of life. This is why in Bill 14 we just push the anti-bullying bill to all people from all walks of life without emphasizing any specific

group, just like what I tell you we understand in Bill 13. So Bill 13 highlights some of the specific groups, but not all. This is why we oppose it.

Bill 13 is a bill emphasizing people that are equal, but some people are more equal than others. This is not acceptable in our Canadian culture.

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Also, the impression that Bill 13 gives us is that this is not an anti-bullying bill only. This is more or less a political statement compared to the other bills, like Bill 14. In Bill 13, we don’t see that everyone is equal, but in Bill 14 we could see that because it doesn’t emphasize any specific interest group. It just says “all,” “anyone.”

Also, Bill 13 emphasizes specific kinds of discrimination, but in our statistics I believe you can see that discrimination factors would be your race, your physical image. For example, when you walk out of a convenience store, you see a measuring tape on the side that tells your height. That means when a convenience store is being robbed, the policeman will ask, “What is the robber’s race? What is their physical image?” A policeman won’t ask, “What is their sexual orientation?” This is why we could conclude that your physical image, your race would be at the top of the list of discrimination factors. In Bill 13, they are intentionally ignoring these two, but promote—discrimination of the other one, just like sexual orientation, but this may not be acceptable to most Ontario citizens.

This is why I’m here to challenge our Ontario Liberal government. If their MPPs vote freely and don’t go with the party line, I believe that Bill 13 won’t pass, but Bill 14 will get passed because Bill 14 is fair to all people.

Also, another concern from our group would be that they’ve never heard about any consultations from the MPPs about Bill 13. I could not tell why—because in our group, people are from all over Toronto.

So for the time being, I believe the Liberal government should give a pause to Bill 13.

That is my presentation today.

The Chair (Mr. Ernie Hardeman): We have about a minute and a half left, but we’ll leave it at that. We thank you very much for your presentation, and we look forward to the deliberations. I’m sure that the committee will take your presentation into consideration as we deliberate in the future.

Mr. Bob Delaney: Chair, I think we’ll take the minute and a half.

The Chair (Mr. Ernie Hardeman): I think it’s already gone. You’ll have to wait till the next time.

Mr. Bob Delaney: No, we’re not running behind time. Chair, I think we’ll take the opportunity for the minute and a half.

The Chair (Mr. Ernie Hardeman): If you’d like the minute and a half, go for it.

Mr. Kevin Daniel Flynn: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Just very quickly, my understanding is that most members in the House would like to see a combination of Bill 13 and Bill 14 go through—that sort of accommodates. I appreciate some of the things you’ve been saying about how

the purpose of the bill and section 9—there are some wording differences there. Those people I've talked to have said that the wording in section 9 was intended to include all those that were included in the purpose, as well. So I appreciate your concern in that regard.

We talk about the sensitivity of faith-based schools, and I'm wondering: What should a gay student, for example, who is being bullied in a faith-based school do? The reason we're here today—and I think there's some agreement forming amongst the parties—is that some kids have felt they've been treated pretty badly at school. Some kids have even gone to the extreme of taking their own lives as a result of it.

Mr. David Kong: You mean a student from Ottawa?

Mr. Kevin Daniel Flynn: Yes, from Ottawa and others.

Mr. David Kong: Okay.

Mr. Kevin Daniel Flynn: What should a student who is gay in a faith-based school do if they're being bullied?

Mr. David Kong: As far as I understand—

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: Point of order, Chair: The incident from Ottawa wasn't at a faith-based school. It was at a public school. I just want to be very clear with my colleagues.

The Chair (Mr. Ernie Hardeman): That's not a point of order, but—

Mr. Kevin Daniel Flynn: I don't think I was saying that. I was saying students around the province of Ontario have gone that far, unfortunately.

Mr. David Kong: Okay, maybe I can give a little bit of a statement on this—

The Chair (Mr. Ernie Hardeman): I thank you very much for your presentation. The minute and a half was used by the member. We'll end it there, so thank you very much for your presentation.

Mr. David Kong: Okay. Thank you.

MARKHAM VOICE

The Chair (Mr. Ernie Hardeman): The next presentation is from Markham Voice: Jim Kwan, host. Thank you very much for coming in to make your presentation today. As with the previous delegations, you will have a 15-minute time slot for making your presentation. If there's sufficient time at the end of the presentation, we will let the committee have some questions. With that, we turn the floor over to you. As I said, the clerk will deliver the information that you just gave him so all the members will have that. The floor is yours.

Mr. Jim Kwan: Good afternoon, everybody. Good afternoon, Mr. Chair and the members of the committee. My name is Jim Kwan, the host of Markham Voice.

Markham Voice publishes a weekly article in one of the major Chinese newspapers in the GTA. We also have a markhamvoice.com, a Markham Voice Facebook and QQ/Markham Voice. So we have lots of audience from media.

Regarding Bill 13, Markham Voice—we raised the concern and asked our audience what they think. Basic-

ally, Markham Voice supports the principle of anti-bullying and respecting gay rights and the gay community. Anti-bullying policies should be in full force through education and respect. All school boards should, in their best interests and abilities, provide a safe and warm environment to all students. That's the fact.

However, anti-bullying and promoting gay sex education and lifestyle, the Gay Pride parade, GPP, and gay-straight alliances, GSA, are separate issues. It should be dealt with in a separate manner. Bill 13 should not be rushed into law before full public consultation or even a referendum.

My conclusion here is, Bill 13 should be amended according to the actual need of protecting all students from bullying through education and respect for each other, not by forcing gay education and lifestyle to all students through gay-straight alliance, GSA, groups and the Gay Pride parade, GPP. We respect all gay people, but gay education, lifestyles and activities are not for all students or parents or religious groups. Therefore, their rights should be respected as well. The Ontario government should not implement an unfair law to students, schools and school boards. It should be an optional choice for students, schools or school boards on promoting gay education, lifestyle, GPP or GSA.

That's the opinion we have from the public. It should be amended accordingly. Thank you very much for your valuable time. That's my comment today. It's very short but right to the point.

The Chair (Mr. Ernie Hardeman): Thank you very much for your time.

Mr. Jim Kwan: Thank you very much.

The Chair (Mr. Ernie Hardeman): We do have about 12 minutes left on the presentation, so we will start with the official opposition. We will have four minutes for each caucus for questions.

Mr. Jim Kwan: Any questions?

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: Well, Jim, I just simply want to say thanks for coming. As all of the presenters who are here today and who will be here for the next few weeks, this is important work that we're doing in the committee. There are bound to be disagreements among people who are appearing before committee. But I want to say this to everybody who will appear or who has appeared: It takes tremendous courage to put your name on the line and speak to a number of people who do this for a living, day to day. So I just want to thank you, the others who appeared before you, and those who will appear before this committee in the days and weeks ahead.

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Again, just to reiterate, there will be times when not all of us will agree, but the good thing about democracy is that we have the ability to air that, and this is what is being displayed here today. So again, I just want to congratulate you.

I know my colleagues will have some questions. I hope they'll be easy on the public, as I will be, because there's nothing greater than actually being allowed to talk to people who have their views and coming right before that table that you're at, so thanks.

Mr. Jim Kwan: Thank you.

The Chair (Mr. Ernie Hardeman): The third party?

Mr. Peter Tabuns: Yes, thank you, Chair. Thank you very much for coming in and presenting today.

Mr. Jim Kwan: You're quite welcome.

Mr. Peter Tabuns: I have a few questions, because the themes that you've put forward are similar to those that have been put forward by others earlier today. I've gone through Bill 13, and I don't see a sex education component in the bill. Could you tell me where that is?

Mr. Jim Kwan: If there's a GSA in the school, of course they will discuss and talk about it. In the bill, they specify that there are nine sexual orientations of gay activities, so obviously there will be a discussion in the school environment. But it is not accepted by all students or all parents or school boards, so to be a fair law for all communities and for all students, we should consider an amendment to make a change to make it suitable to everybody, without any arguments. That's what I think we should do.

Mr. Peter Tabuns: So that I'm clear, then, the fact that "gay-straight alliance" is mentioned in there, and "LGBT" is in there—this is the sex education component that you refer to?

Mr. Jim Kwan: Well, there's sex education stuff in grade 4, I believe.

Mr. Peter Tabuns: Right, but in this bill—where in this bill do you see that?

Mr. Jim Kwan: Well, no, it does not specify, in this, sex education.

Mr. Peter Tabuns: I'm not trying to be tricky, but a lot of people have been saying this, and I read the bill through and I can't find it. If I'm missing something, I appreciate it.

When you talk about sex education in the bill, you're talking about the use of the terms "gay-straight alliance" and "LGBTQ" in the preamble?

Mr. Jim Kwan: That's correct, yes.

Mr. Peter Tabuns: Okay. I have some difficulty with the argument you make around privilege, because I've heard similar arguments around the Human Rights Commission that we shouldn't have protection for ethnic minorities or racialized minorities because—why should they have any privilege over the majority, or the mainstream?

Mr. Jim Kwan: Actually, it's not a privilege that we're talking about; it's the right of parents or school boards, or their choice—they don't have it. Once a law is a law, everybody has to follow it. It doesn't matter who you are or what religion you're in; you've got to follow it. That may upset lots of people, as a matter of fact. As other members of the public brought forward, there were some surveys, some petitions; you can clearly see lots of objections to the bill.

Mr. Peter Tabuns: No, I know that, but I've gone door to door in my riding, which you may know; I represent east Chinatown. I go door to door and I have occasionally had long-term Anglo-Saxons yell at me for the obvious privilege the Chinese community is getting with

the way that they market food on the sidewalk. I argue with them. I say, "This is traditional. No one is harmed." But it offends them. I know that many people will assume that "if it's right for me, that's the standard or mode of behaviour everyone else has to follow."

Mr. Jim Kwan: It's the freedom of choice and freedom of religion and freedom of belief, and I think we are stepping over their toes, I believe.

The Chair (Mr. Ernie Hardeman): Thank you very much. That's all the time there. We go to the government side. Mr. Delaney?

Mr. Bob Delaney: Sir, have you read Bill 13?

Mr. Jim Kwan: Yes.

Mr. Bob Delaney: Okay. I'm just going to pass you a copy of it that you may wish to use to refer to.

Mr. Jim Kwan: All right.

Mr. Bob Delaney: I want to pick up some of Mr. Tabuns's questions. In your handout, you say, "anti-bullying and promoting gay sex education and lifestyle, gay pride parade" etc. Please tell me what section of the bill you find that in.

Mr. Jim Kwan: If you permitted the sex education of a gay lifestyle in the environment—so if people request a GSA, you have to let them have a GSA. That's directly or indirectly promoting the gay lifestyle.

Mr. Bob Delaney: So in other words, if a group of students in a school ask the school principal, "Can we use a room in the school to discuss lifestyle issues which may include homosexuality?" the school principal should say no.

Mr. Jim Kwan: We should have a choice. Some students can do it, but if you have a law, all schools, all students have to accept that kind of environment.

Mr. Bob Delaney: So in other words, if students ask for it, the school should say yes, right?

Mr. Jim Kwan: It depends on what school, I believe. They should have a choice. We should have a school—like, if people want gay education for gay lifestyles, we should have a special school for that.

Mr. Bob Delaney: Oh, so there should be special schools for students—

Mr. Jim Kwan: No. You let the choice of the people, of the school board, the school or parents, determine if they should have that kind of information for their students, for their kids.

Mr. Bob Delaney: I'm trying to understand what it is you're advocating here. If a group of students in a school say, "We would like to be able to get together and to discuss, on the school premises, our sexual orientation or our curiosity with the issues, or our issues," you're saying that the school—

Mr. Jim Kwan: You're talking about the rule for all students in Ontario. That may not be suitable to make it as a law. We should make it as optional for any school, if they have a choice or the parents have a choice. That's what I'm talking about.

Mr. Bob Delaney: So would you please answer the question I've asked you? If the students ask for it, should the school provide it? Yes or no?

Mr. Jim Kwan: No. It depends on what school. If it's a Jewish or Catholic school or any religion school, if it's against their religion, no; or against the parents' choice, no.

Mr. Bob Delaney: That's all I wanted to know. Thank you.

The Chair (Mr. Ernie Hardeman): Thank you very much for that and thank you very much for your presentation. That concludes your time.

Mr. Jim Kwan: Thank you.

The Chair (Mr. Ernie Hardeman): The next delegation is Evangelical Association: Rondo Thomas, executive director. Rondo Thomas, the Evangelical Association? Rondo Thomas, executive director? He's not here?

MS. JOCELYN KO

The Chair (Mr. Ernie Hardeman): Is Jocelyn Ko here? Okay. You are the next presentation. It seems that the one for 4:30 is not here, so if you wish to come forward and make your presentation now, it will shorten the day for all of us.

Ms. Cheri DiNovo: We're running a bit early. The next one is 4:45, so they may arrive still.

The Chair (Mr. Ernie Hardeman): That was 4:45, okay. We will provide the opportunity for the other one to come back, if they are not here. But you go ahead and make your presentation.

Mr. Kevin Daniel Flynn: Mr. Chair, just so we're on the same page, our delegations stopped at 4:45.

The Chair (Mr. Ernie Hardeman): Yes. There has been one added since then.

Mr. Kevin Daniel Flynn: One?

The Chair (Mr. Ernie Hardeman): Yes.

Mr. Kevin Daniel Flynn: Okay. Thank you.

The Chair (Mr. Ernie Hardeman): The present delegation was not on the list. The calls were still coming in as the agenda was prepared. So this was one that could come in before, and so—

Interjections.

The Chair (Mr. Ernie Hardeman): Okay, we'll proceed with this one and we'll start with yours next, if you don't mind, sir.

Interjection.

The Chair (Mr. Ernie Hardeman): Yes. The presentation is yours. Again, as I said with the other ones, you will have 15 minutes to make a presentation. If you have not used all your time, we will allow the members of the committee to ask questions. If you'd rather not answer questions, make sure your presentation directs you that way, but we give you the floor and we thank you very much for your participation.

Ms. Jocelyn Ko: Thank you.

Ladies and gentlemen, this is my first time speaking to so many people in front of me, so I'm quite nervous. I would like you all to listen very carefully as I read to you a 17-year-old boy's account of his lifelong struggle with bullying in school.

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"Throughout my junior school years, I could only remember how I was abused in all sorts of ways. I was the youngest and the smallest kid in my class. Since junior kindergarten, I was called many names, like 'pig face' and 'ching-ching.' I was deliberately pushed and bumped by classmates. Even the vice-principal made light of all the complaints that were reported. Sometimes my mother came out of the office crying, because the staff did nothing to help me.

"During the six years of my junior school life, during recesses, lunches and after school, I faced much of the bullying, where one big tough boy would lead a group of other boys. Even girls would take advantage of my inability to defend myself.

"I remember how one tall boy picked me up by my head, with his hands on each side of my head. I remember how students would throw tennis balls, basketballs and all sorts of other things, including pencil shreds, at me. Once, I suddenly woke up on the ground with everybody looking down at me. One teacher, who thought I was being silly, pulled me up by my hair, off the pavement, saying, 'Get up now.' And everybody would laugh and giggle. I was rushed to the hospital later by my mother, because I had a serious concussion. I was badly hurt this time. It even affected my eyesight and memory for some time.

"You would think the bullying would stop at this point. On the contrary, I constantly faced bullying even as I attended junior high school, and it was not only physical. Almost every day, when I went to my locker and opened it, I found it stacked. It means all books on top of the shelf would collapse to the bottom. Once, in grade 8, I came to my locker only to find that someone not only stacked my locker but yanked the metal door open. Things were stolen. Chlorine that was taken from the caretaker's room was poured all over. All my books and clothes were destroyed. I was often late for class after cleaning up the mess in my locker. Once, I was collecting books from the locker, and all of a sudden, a student shoved me into my locker and attempted to lock me in there.

"I had pretty much given up reporting it to the teachers and the office, because no action would be taken, and it only aggravated the bully even more. As a result, I would only be able to tell my mother. She reports it to the principal, only to be told to calm down. The principal would remind me to come to the office first to report any problem and not to go to my mother. Teachers would say, 'Ignore them. They will go away eventually.'

"One student, who had become popular with the crowd, grabbed me and tackled me, trying to throw me off the staircase over the stairwell. It was half a storey high. The crowd gathered around in a circle on the platform, since there were no teachers around, and every student was cheering her on. Where were my friends, you may ask? They were either too scared to stand up for me or were cheering her on as well.

"I thought of killing myself many times.

“My brother faced a different kind of bullying from time to time. He was told by his teacher during the class discussion that he was not considered a Canadian, even though he was born in Canada.

“Would not all of this that I am telling you bother you at all? Would it not concern you at all that children face this kind of bullying in school? Many others like me have already committed suicide or face lifelong struggles from the trauma. I’m glad I didn’t. I had put my trust in God, who I know sustained me all these years.

“I’m telling you all of this to let you know that bullying is wrong and that it is very real.”

This speech was given by a 17-year-old teenager in 1993. He was a victim of bullying. I was the victim’s mother. Though my children went through much turmoil during the school years, thank God that today they’ve both become decent, responsible, loyal Canadians.

We love Canada; we hate bullying. That is why we should support Bill 14. I totally disagree with Bill 13. I hope it will never be brought up again. Bill 13 violates the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. Every Canadian has the freedom of speech, the freedom of religion, the freedom of conscience and the freedom of belief. This is the most beautiful part of Canada. But Bill 13 will force people to accept personal preferences and beliefs by passing a law for every student in Ontario—to study it and to even promote it. The youngest children will be force-fed subjects that they are not even ready to learn. To them, it’s not sex education. Call it what you want, but it’s downright brainwashing.

According to a national survey, homosexual people are nowhere near the main group of people being bullied. What students need to be taught to eliminate bullying is morals and love, not gender differences and sexual knowledge. I strongly believe that Bill 13 will create more problems in the school by encouraging students to segregate based on gay-lesbian groups and encouraging gangs to form. Instead of anti-bullying—it may promote an unsafe school environment for all students.

I believe Bill 13 will endanger children, who, at such an innocent age, will fall victim to sexual predators. Since we are already dealing with child pornography, child abuse and human trafficking of young children even in our society, we don’t need another law that will reinforce the problem.

Lenin once said, “Give me four years to teach the children and the seed I have sown will never be uprooted.”

Hitler said, “Give me your children today, and I will give you the world tomorrow.”

The promotion of the LGBTQ agenda is no different.

I beg you, do not let them take our parents’ rights from us. Our American neighbours have the First Amendment that protects people from the government’s ability to pass any laws that will prohibit or infringe upon freedom of religion, speech, assembly, press or petition. Since when has Canada, the land of “the True North strong and free” and the land which God keeps “glorious and free,” become a communist country?

I urge you: Please sing O Canada with me now.

O Canada, our home and native land!
True patriot love in all thy sons command.

With glowing hearts we see thee rise,
The True North strong and free!

From far and wide,
O Canada, we stand on guard for thee.

God keep our land glorious and free!
O Canada, we stand on guard for thee.

O Canada, we stand on guard for thee.

I haven’t finished yet. My kid, this bullied kid, told me: “Mom, I have forgiven every one of them. I don’t remember anymore. But please tell them I hate bullying.”

Thank you very much.

1650

The Chair (Mr. Ernie Hardeman): Thank you very much for your presentation. I do want to point out that my not getting up had nothing to do with not being patriotic, but I am restricted in participating. Thank you very much for your presentation, and—

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: Point of order, Speaker: Even though my beloved Sens did not make it to another round in the playoffs, I just want it known that I would have said, “Go, Sens, go,” had they still been in the playoffs after that.

The Chair (Mr. Ernie Hardeman): I do appreciate that. I do appreciate the singing of the national anthem and everyone standing for it. We thank you for your presentation.

EVANGELICAL ASSOCIATION

The Chair (Mr. Ernie Hardeman): The next one is the presentation we went by before. We have the Evangelical Association: Rondo Thomas, executive director. Sir, sorry, we were just slightly ahead of schedule because some of the parties didn’t take up all their time on the previous presenter and we went by yours before I realized that the time had not yet arrived, so we will now hear your presentation.

Thank you very much for being here. We also want to point out that you have 15 minutes to make your presentation. If time is allowed at the end, we will divide it equally among the parties, unless it’s such that it can’t be divided appropriately, and then we will have it open with the New Democratic Party, who will have the first shot at the amount of time that’s left. With that, the floor is yours.

Mr. Rondo Thomas: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I’d like to thank the entire committee for taking the time to be here to hear these positions today and throughout the week. This is not easy. I know what it’s like to have to sit in these committee meetings for many hours and I appreciate it so very much. Mr. Malcolm is sitting at my left. He was intended to be on the docket sometime this morning, and it didn’t work out that way, so I’ve agreed

that I would try to share a little bit of my time with him, if that pleases the Chair and the committee.

In the meantime, I'd just like to say how much I appreciate the whole idea of bringing forward legislation that prohibits bullying. Certainly, I want to speak today specifically to Bill 13.

As the executive director of the Evangelical Association, I represent over 600 pastors and their congregations in Ontario. As members of the citizens of the province of Ontario, we support the anti-bullying bill. Bullying in any form should not be tolerated in this country.

Each of these congregations has been watching this bill proceed with keen interest. Many of these congregations rent space in public schools for their Sunday worship services and other community activities.

Bill 13 in its present form is heavily slanted in favour of one interest group and serves as a Trojan horse to promote their agenda and has nothing to do with bullying. Surely we can disagree on points of view without being disagreeable by bullying, through legislation, those who have a different view from us.

If Bill 13 passes in its present form, it serves as a sledgehammer to force one view over another. It would require churches to compromise the teaching of the Bible, teaching that has been in place for 2,000 years. To suppose that the church could change the words of the Bible simply is not in the power of man to do. To impose the current wording of Bill 13 places those congregations in an untenable position. The bill in its present form is bullying the churches and other religious groups of this province who use the public schools for very worthy community projects. If we are to acknowledge the common law of separation of church and state, legislation that reflects such separation ought to be put forward.

Since most people who suffer from bullying are not a part of the LGBTQ community, there should not be a portion of this bill to promote their agenda or view. We find it disturbing that our Premier would embrace this position of the bill and, to add insult to injury, embrace the project put forward by Dan Savage to support this bill. Mr. Savage sees fit to bully Christians and blaspheme the Bible to promote his version of anti-bullying.

We request that the portion of this bill that give special status to any special interest group be removed from the bill. Then we would have a bill that would be acceptable to the people that I represent.

Thank you very much for your time, and thank you very much for hearing our position. I certainly would be happy to take questions.

The Chair (Mr. Ernie Hardeman): We have about 10 minutes left so we will divide it up, three minutes per party. We will start with the third party. Ms. DiNovo.

Ms. Cheri DiNovo: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I'm a United Church minister—my other job—and I also consider myself an evangelist as well, in the meaning of the Bible. You will appreciate, as a United Church member—it's still the largest Protestant denomination in Canada—that we hold very different views of what the Bible says, perhaps, than yourself, sir. So I just wanted to start by stating that.

I also wanted to refer back to the lady, that I know you heard, who described the plight of a victim of bullying. In my pastoral experience, I have heard very similar stories from parents of LGBT students. My question really is: If your child were to be gay—at least 64% of gay students experience bullying; they have the highest rate of suicide—how would you suggest that they deal with that within the context of the school? Again, Bill 13 names a number of different groups, not just this group. But if your child were gay, would you allow them to start a group that would support them in their exploration?

Mr. Rondo Thomas: I believe that there's already legislation to protect them in this case, and I think that legislation that's already in place certainly ought to be implemented. I would vote for that 100%. But I do not think that the bill ought to be segregating out different groups for specific treatment. If you're going to do that, it means that you're going to have to have organizations and groups and programs in the schools that wouldn't leave any room and time for academics.

If it were my child—I'd like it to be on the record that my baby sister, who's not all that young now, is a lesbian married to a lesbian. I love her with all my heart, and if she called me today to give her help in any way, I would be there in a minute. I don't agree with her lifestyle, but I love her with all my heart, so I would want her to be treated fairly, like everybody else. I agree that they ought to be treated fairly. They shouldn't be bullied and there ought to be legislation to protect them, but also to protect everyone else. I don't think they should be separated out.

Ms. Cheri DiNovo: Sir, I would suggest, just check the bill out because, really, that's what it does.

I agree that we are looking at two bills here, Bill 14 and Bill 13. Bill 14 has some great strengths, so what this committee has been challenged to do is to combine those. What I would suggest you and your organization do is, if there is a specific amendment to Bill 13, please put that forward, because in my reading the bill, it does not favour one group over another.

Mr. Rondo Thomas: I would be speaking specifically to the idea of having gay-lesbian clubs in every school in the province. They don't have Christian clubs in every school in the province, and they don't have Muslim clubs in every school in the province. So I don't think it's appropriate to sort out one group over another.

Ms. Cheri DiNovo: There is nothing in Bill 13 that says that there should be gay-straight alliances in every school in the province; not one word that indicates that.

What it does, and what we hope to do, what I hope to do, is to give children—they're children, after all—the ability to basically protect themselves and to build support for themselves, whoever they may be, however they may be bullied. And it's not during school; it's after school. But I thank you very much for your presentation.

The Chair (Mr. Ernie Hardeman): Thank you very much. The government side. Mr. Delaney?

Mr. Bob Delaney: Thank you, Chair. Ms. DiNovo has quite admirably covered the ground that we intended to ask on. I'd like to thank the deputant for his time in having come in to present his opinions today.

Mr. Rondo Thomas: I wonder, Mr. Chairman, would it be appropriate for me to ask if Mr. Malcolm could have a moment to speak at this time and take my time?

The Chair (Mr. Ernie Hardeman): Yes, that would be fine. Thank you for your presentation.

MR. EKRON MALCOLM

The Chair (Mr. Ernie Hardeman): We do have a few minutes left to make a presentation, if Mr. Malcolm would like to speak.

Mr. Ekron Malcolm: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Again, my name is Ekron Malcolm, Institute for Canadian Values.

First of all, thank you for the opportunity to be able to give and speak freely about the legislation, Bill 13, and to thank you in advance for allowing me to share my heart and the heart of so many parents and families who hold the same views and opinions as I do toward this proposed legislation, Bill 13.

In reading this legislation, I feel that this legislation is meant to create fear and intimidation and to make me, as I felt it, a lesser citizen.

As I read this legislation, I feel that it is hostile as well towards parents. This legislation wants to be able to take away the rights of parents to govern their children, and I would ask, in that case, what kind of society are you trying to create?

I feel this is a form, really—and I've thought about this—to me, as I came to it, it's really a form of slavery. What I mean by that is, yes, it's to bind our minds to engage in what we do not want and what we do not believe is appropriate for us, and to take away our traditional values.

1700

I quote from paragraph 29.1 of subsection 8: "Require boards to develop and implement an equity and inclusive education policy, and, if required by the minister, submit the policy to the minister and implement changes to the policy as directed by the minister."

I think you see me here, and you can see that I'm of a different ethnic background. I went to school in Canada, in Toronto. I don't think I have to tell you whether or not I was bullied. However, in this same understanding and with that same heart, I understand that we do need an anti-bullying bill, but one that is strictly anti-bullying towards those specifics only, as opposed to singling out any particular group.

Because of this equity and inclusive policy, which you all probably have a copy of here, "Teachers are obligated to address all equity issues." This is great. "Any omissions that maintain a non-inclusive curriculum and pedagogy are considered to foster a poisoned environment." I have a problem with this.

"The TDSB Equity Foundation Statement and Commitments to Equity Policy Implementation states that each school has a responsibility to education that reflects the diversity of its students and their life experiences. Singling out one group or topic area as too controversial, and depending upon parent/guardian/caregiver discre-

tion"—this is nice wording, but look at what it says—"shifts this responsibility from the school to the parents/guardians/caregivers and fosters a poisoned environment contrary to" the TDSB.

"Can a parent have their child accommodated out of human rights education"—LGBTQ—"based on religious grounds?" You say, "No."

"Should schools send notes or permission slips home before starting any classroom work on LGBTQ"—lesbian, gay, bisexual, transsexual, two-spirited, queer—"issues?" You say, "No."

"Can teachers seek accommodation from teaching materials that may contradict their religious beliefs?" You say, "No."

Would you teach your children six genders and gender identity? Have you taught your children six genders and gender identity, and they can choose whatever gender they wish, apart from what they were born with? Now you're putting it under the guise of bullying and using legislative power to enforce your opinion and your desires and ideas upon my family values, against my family values. Do I not have the right to teach my family values, my black family values? Are you saying that my black family values are fostering a poisoned environment?

I quote the preamble: "...believe that students need to be equipped with the knowledge, skills, attitude and values to engage the world and others critically, which means developing a critical consciousness that allows them to take action on making their schools and communities more equitable and inclusive for all people, including LGBTTIQ." Another two genders just got added.

I feel that the Legislature is trying to make me second-class by this bill, that you are forcing your plans and your desires upon me and my family.

Now, I would say this with respect, but how dare you try to force children to subscribe to this explicit and sexual material? How dare you try to take away my heritage, my right to live and believe what is right for me and my children and my children's children?

I am not a second-class citizen, and I will not bow to this legislation. I would say, then, to every parent whom I know would die for their children and die for the rights of their children to live, and their grandchildren's future, not to allow this legislation but to rise up against it.

I appeal to you legislators to protect children—to protect all children, because I believe that black children are important too. And I would say, then: Is there an assumption being made here that my family values and the teaching of the Bible are fostering a poisoned environment? I appeal to you one more time: Protect children. Yes, protect all children. Thank you very much.

The Chair (Mr. Ernie Hardeman): Thank you very much for your presentation. That does conclude the presentation.

It also concludes this meeting. We will adjourn until 4 p.m., Tuesday, May 8, 2012, to continue these hearings on Bills 13 and 14.

The committee adjourned at 1706.

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