
**Statement by André Schutten, ARPA Canada
On Religious Freedom in Canada**

March 25, 2015

As a Christian lawyer heavily involved in religious freedom issues in Canada, I can say that across this country at the regulatory, municipal, provincial and even federal level, laws and regulations continue to be passed that restrict or curtail the religious freedom of Canadians.

Egregious examples include decisions by law societies in various provinces that blatantly discriminate against Evangelical Christians. These law societies chose to ban law students from becoming lawyers in their provinces simply because they attended an Evangelical Christian university.

In various municipalities, Christians have been prevented or even fined for holding church services in rented public space.

Professional bodies have indicated they want to force doctors to violate their consciences by either performing or referring for procedures that are immoral - including the horrific and barbarous act of killing innocent pre-born children.

Education policy across the country seeks to impose a one-size-fits-all approach on all schools, the religious objections of parents and communities notwithstanding.

Now, just last week, the Supreme Court has ruled, "*A secular state respects religious differences, it does not seek to extinguish them.*" Indeed! Our Charter of Rights and Freedoms protects religious freedom from the unjust infringements of the State.

We need our governments to stop violating those principles. We need our governments to show respect for the positive contributions that religious families, churches, schools and communities make to our country.

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