

On April 14, 2012, the AHEA board was unanimously re-elected for another year. This was a strong show of support for the work AHEA has been doing. The past few months have been filled with an intensity I have never before experienced, and in speaking with home educators across the province, this passion, this desire to stand for an issue we believe could negatively affect our ability to home educate and the face of our society, has moved individuals to passionate conviction, action and interest in the political system.

Over the past months, homeschoolers voiced their concern with the Alberta Human Rights Act being included in Section 16 of the provincial *Education Act*. A report from the The Justice Center for Constitutional Freedoms¹ and information provided by Member of Parliament Brad Trost² have outlined how Canadian Human Rights Acts violate freedom of speech rights and selectively oppress Canadians who hold small 'c' conservative political or religious views. The research specifically outlines the procedural unfairness of Human Rights Acts in terms of the costs to those accused and the absence of safeguards to protect innocent individuals.

Over the past weeks and months, we have seen several such complaints brought before provincial human rights commissions. Two recent examples are:

On April 23, 2012, a Saskatchewan city councillor was charged with a human rights offense after he prayed a blessing over the food and mentioned Jesus, ending with "amen." The man who made the human rights charge claimed that "*It made me feel like a second-class citizen. It makes you feel excluded.*"³

On March 5, 2012, a BC man who knowingly spread HIV to four women, made a complaint to the BC human rights tribunal that his HIV treatment was disrupted while he was in a Vancouver Correctional Center. While the statute of limitations had expired on this case, a tribunal member agreed to hear the case on the grounds that this man was a vulnerable person.⁴

Alberta home educators are at risk of complaints being made against us. By defining our homes as 'schools' and thus making us public institutions (as the current *School Act* and Bill 2 do), everything we say in our homes could be open to potential charges under human rights legislation. Third party allegations are heard by Human Rights Commissions based **not** on whether the

statements made are true or false, but instead based on whether or not an individual is offended by what has been stated.

A variety of organizations have come together to voice opposition to embedding the AHRA within the Education Act. The Alberta Catholic Schools Trustees Association, various private schools associations, REAL Women, and various churches and individuals are standing together to voice opposition. On May 14, 2012, Canadian bishops "*highlighted the anti-religious nature of some 'anti-discrimination' laws, as well as the tendency of advocacy groups to use provincial Human Rights Tribunals to promote a radical agenda and block believers from speaking and acting freely.*"⁵ The voice of opposition continues to grow.

AHEA worked very hard to bring these concerns to the attention the Department of Education (through the Inspiring Education consultation process), the Minister of Education (through face-to-face and telephone meetings as well as written communication) and individual MLA's and the Premier (through your letters and telephone calls). When these methods offered no results, two rallies were held, one by home educators alone (with an estimated attendance of over 700 individuals) and then in conjunction with coalition groups (with over 2,152 enumerated). There was prayerful consultation and planning each step of the way and on March 22, 2012, *Bill 2: The Education Act* died on the Order Paper in the Alberta Legislature.

An election has now come and gone, and with it an awakening of many individuals to issues and concerns, and a new vigor on the part of many for participation in the democratic process. *The Education Act* will be reintroduced in some form into the Legislature, likely in the fall of 2012. A new Education Minister has been appointed, the Honourable Jeff Johnson, MLA for Athabasca-Redwater. Mr. Johnson was the co-chair for *Inspiring Education*, is a graduate of Camrose Lutheran College, and is the father of three children. AHEA is anticipating working with Minister Johnson with eagerness.

It is important for homeschool families to meet with their MLAs and to be the face and vision of home education for our elected representatives. It is also important to continue to bring to light to other Albertans the concerns and problems with the Alberta Human Rights Act itself, as well as with embedding it within *The Education Act*. If you are interested in assisting even more, please contact Patty Marler at govliaison@aheaonline.com. AHEA will be working closely with the coalition opposing the inclusion of the AHRA in Alberta's *Education Act* and will continue lobby our government for any necessary changes.

Keep up to date with the latest information by regularly visiting the *Political Updates* page on the AHEA website (www.ahaeonline.com). Urgent information will be passed along via e-alerts, so consider signing up on our website to receive these notices. As always, AHEA also recommends diligent recording of educational endeavours and access to legal counsel when needed through membership with Home School Legal Defense Association (www.hslda.ca).

Most importantly, we will continue to rely on God's direction and ask you to continue to pray fervently. Pray for our political leaders, for the *AHRA* to be taken out of the *Education Act*, and for wisdom and direction for AHEA. While our plans as home educators were for small changes for us, God's plans were, and continue to be, much bigger, and He continues to lead the way. May we be strengthened with the knowledge that His plans are always good.

"My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness. Therefore I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ's power may rest on me."
~ 2 Corinthians 12:9 ~



Patty is the home educating wife of Jeff whom she has been married to for 24 years. She is the mother of 4 children, all of whom have always been home educated, with the eldest having graduated in May 2011, making the fruits of

their efforts coming to fruition. The significant issues related to Bill 2 have been challenging. Words which have carried Patty are, "When God calls you to it, He will lead you through it."

(Endnotes)

1 *From Bad to Worse - Examining Restrictions on Speech and Procedural Fairness in Human Rights Legislation in Fourteen Canadian Jurisdictions* - John Carpay and Carol Crosson ([http://www.jccf.ca/images/From Bad to Worse - Executive Summary.pdf](http://www.jccf.ca/images/From%20Bad%20to%20Worse%20-%20Executive%20Summary.pdf))

2 <http://ezrelevant.com/FreeSpeechbyMPBradTrost2023JUN08.pdf>

3 Christian prayer by city councillor sparks to Sask. Human Rights Commission by Betty Ann Adam, the starphoenix Calgary Herald <http://www.calgaryherald.com/life/Christian+prayer+city+councillor+sparks+complaint+Sask+Human+Rights+Commission/6502691/story.html>

4 Charles Mzite, Man Who Spread HIV, Files Human Rights Complaint Against B.C. The Huffington Post http://www.huffingtonpost.ca/2012/03/05/charles-mzite-human-rights-complaint_n_1322529.html

5 Canadians' religious freedom in danger, bishops warn <http://www.catholicnewsagency.com/news/canadians-religious-freedom-in-danger-bishops-warn/>

6 *From Bad to Worse - Examining Restrictions on Speech and Procedural Fairness in Human Rights Legislation in Fourteen Canadian Jurisdictions* - John Carpay and Carol Crosson (<http://www.jccf.ca/images/From%20Bad%20to%20Worse%20-%20Executive%20Summary.pdf>)