



Abortion Rights  
Coalition of Canada

*Your Voice for Choice*

Coalition pour le droit à  
l'avortement au Canada

*Canada's only national political pro-choice advocacy group*

POB 2663, Station Main, Vancouver, BC, V6B 3W3 • info@arcc-cdac.ca • www.arcc-cdac.ca

---

For immediate release

September 20, 2012

## Daily Protests to Occur at City Hall Against Kelowna's "Protect Human Life Week"

KELOWNA — In response to Kelowna Mayor Walter Gray's refusal to rescind the proclamation of September 23-30 as "Protect Human Life Week," the Abortion Rights Coalition of Canada and organizers in Kelowna are announcing a week-long protest on the ground. Protesters will meet at Kelowna City Hall from noon to 1:00 pm each weekday, September 24 to 28, with the exception of Wednesday, when they will meet from noon to 5:00 pm.

Mayor Gray's proclamation was made on behalf of the Kelowna Right to Life Society, and states that "it is the intention of this proclamation to promote respect and protection to all human life, especially the infirm, the aged, the handicapped, and the unborn."

The City's Proclamation Policy explains further that proclamations are issued to "increase public awareness" of the cause "and/or to promote" and "support" and "help meet" the activities and programs related to the organization seeking the proclamation.

"The mayor has claimed that proclamations do not represent an endorsement by the city, but the city's Proclamation Policy tells a different story," said Joyce Arthur, Executive Director of the Abortion Rights Coalition of Canada. "The 'Protect Human Life Week' proclamation far exceeds the role of a neutral event announcement. Specifically, the city is undermining women's equality rights and encouraging and endorsing a view that is contrary to Canadian and international law."

According to a legal opinion sent earlier to the Mayor by Westcoast LEAF (<http://www.westcoastleaf.org/index.php?newsid=221&pageID=1>), the city has a duty to uphold the rule of law, respect the *Charter of Rights and Freedoms* and Supreme Court jurisprudence, and foster a community culture that respects women's rights and freedoms.

Well over 600 people have signed an online petition against the Mayor's proclamation, with many leaving comments expressing the anger and frustration that is building across the

country (<http://www.gopetition.com/petitions/open-letter-demanding-that-mayor-of-kelowna-rescind-ant.html>). “Why is the city of Kelowna championing a fundamentalist group that wishes to patronize Canadian women and deny them the right to control their own bodies?” asks one signatory. “There is a serious boundary problem when an elected official makes a public proclamation opposing the legal rights of an individual and the interior state of her uterus,” writes another. “Canadian women will NOT go back to the bad old days!” another warns.

Kelowna activist Dianne Varga explains the reason why protesters will gather for the entire afternoon on September 26. “Abortion rights are under fire all across North America right now. Here in Canada, Stephen Woodworth’s Motion 312 is going to be debated for its second hour on September 21 and go to a vote in the House of Commons on September 26. Motion 312 challenges the definition of a human being that’s set out in the Criminal Code. If Woodworth is successful in promoting his motion, it will reopen the abortion debate in this country and threaten to re-criminalize abortion. On September 26 we will either be celebrating the outcome of the vote or strategizing on the next steps to take.”

###

For more information, please contact:

<b>Joyce Arthur</b>	Executive Director, ARCC-CDAC, Vancouver	<a href="mailto:jharthur@shaw.ca">jharthur@shaw.ca</a>	604-351-0867
<b>Dianne Varga</b>	Activist, Kelowna resident	<a href="mailto:info@jetwriting.com">info@jetwriting.com</a>	250-762-0302