

## 2018 Pro-Choice Victories

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Abortion Rights  
Coalition of Canada

Coalition pour le droit à  
l'avortement au Canada

This timeline tallies pro-choice victories in Canada over 2018. Included are service-related progress, court decisions, Ad Standards decisions, failed anti-choice endeavours, and other successes.

### January

- ❖ **15<sup>th</sup> January:** The abortion pill Mifegymiso became available free of charge across BC, with the province becoming the sixth to provide free access to the drug.
- ❖ **31<sup>st</sup> January:** Prime Minister Justin Trudeau publicly defended the changes to the Canada Summer Jobs program, which were triggered by an ARCC campaign. These changes ensured that government grants to employ youth don't go to anti-choice groups, or any employer that would use funds to undermine rights or discriminate. Also on **January 31<sup>st</sup>**, a court ruled against Toronto Right to Life's request to suspend the Canada Summer Jobs application requirement. Changes made to the program in **December 2018** preserved the above intents while mollifying religious groups.

### February

- ❖ **1<sup>st</sup> February:** A new law called the *Safe Access to Abortion Services Act* was passed in Ontario in the fall of 2017 and came into effect in February. It protects eight standalone abortion clinics with a 50m no-protest-zone to allow folks accessing services to do so without harassment. It also protects doctors' homes and offices.
- ❖ **5<sup>th</sup> February:** As of this date, folks in Nova Scotia no longer require a doctor's referral to obtain a surgical abortion.
- ❖ **24<sup>th</sup> February:** The prestigious journal *The Lancet* published a laudatory series of articles about Canada's system of universal health coverage and its global role in health, and its "legacy, challenges, and future path" regarding access to health care and gender equality, among other topics. Prime Minister Justin Trudeau authored one **Lancet article** that advocated for reproductive rights, including abortion. On **March 22<sup>nd</sup>**, global humanitarian groups praised Canada's commitment to initiatives abroad that focus on sexual reproductive health services.

### April

- ❖ **23<sup>rd</sup> April:** The annual "March for Life" in Ottawa was refused a City of Ottawa proclamation, the first time in 15 years. This was a result of a pro-choice campaign against the proclamation, as well as public outcry against an anti-choice flag that was raised at City Hall in 2017.
- ❖ **25<sup>th</sup> April:** The Alberta Court of Appeal found that the City of Grande Prairie's decision to refuse hateful anti-abortion bus ads in 2015 was reasonable. The ads were from the anti-choice group Canadian Centre for Bio-Ethical Reform (CCBR) and said "Abortion kills children". The CCBR had appealed a lower court decision that upheld the city's decision to refuse the ads.

### May

- ❖ **30<sup>th</sup> May:** Ad Standards found a Lethbridge anti-abortion ad on transit buses and benches/shelters to be "inaccurate and misleading", in contravention of the *Canadian Code of Advertising Standards*. The ad pictured a late-term foetus and claimed that foetuses feel pain in abortion. A strong opposition campaign by local and national pro-choice activists had already succeeded in getting the City to remove the ads on **April 5<sup>th</sup>**.

- ❖ **30<sup>th</sup> May:** Alberta passed the *Protecting Choice for Women Accessing Health Care Act*, a law that provides 50m protest-free zones around the two abortion clinics in Calgary and Edmonton. Alberta's Health Minister also announced on **May 15<sup>th</sup>** that abortion services may be expanded to several other cities in Alberta.

## June

- ❖ **2<sup>nd</sup> June:** The BC government passed a new regulation to protect patients and staff of the Vancouver Island Women's Clinic in Victoria from harassment and intimidation. The existing safe access zone around the clinic was expanded from 10m to 50m.

## July

- ❖ **18<sup>th</sup> July:** The government of Newfoundland and Labrador announced it will cover costs of the abortion pill Mifegymiso, starting September 1<sup>st</sup>.
- ❖ **23<sup>rd</sup> July:** Toronto City Council passed a motion that seeks to regulate the display of graphic images of aborted fetuses on public rights-of-way. Toronto residents were subjected to the images over the summer, and Toronto took **several measures**, including instructing legal staff to look at remedies and asking the provincial government to step in. MPP Peter Tabuns also created a **Trespassing Notice** that Ontarians can send to the anti-choice group CCBR.

## September

- ❖ **25<sup>th</sup> September:** Ad Standards upheld a complaint against the "Canada has no Abortion Laws" billboards (from the group We Need A Law), that were displayed in numerous locations across Canada over the summer, courtesy of Pattison Outdoor. The billboards contravened the *Canadian Code of Advertising Standards*.

## October

- ❖ **17<sup>th</sup> October:** As a result of Ad Standards' Sept. decision against the "Canada has no Abortion Laws" billboards, the London Transit Commission removed similar ads on the sides of its buses and changed its policy. Any ad possibly in conflict with standards must now be vetted by Ad Standards before being placed on transit.
- ❖ **25<sup>th</sup> October:** Nurse practitioners in the province of Saskatchewan were given the go-ahead to prescribe the abortion pill Mifegymiso.
- ❖ **31<sup>st</sup> October:** Yukon announced full coverage of the abortion pill Mifegymiso, effective immediately.

## November

- ❖ **5<sup>th</sup> November:** Following in the footsteps of the Yukon, the Northwest Territories announced it would also soon provide coverage for Mifegymiso for folks with no other insurance.
- ❖ **26<sup>th</sup> November:** The Women's Choice Clinic at the QEII Health Sciences Centre in Halifax purchased an ultrasound machine after raising \$60,000 through a private foundation and local donations. The clinic received government approval to use the machine on **December 4<sup>th</sup>**.

## December

- ❖ **6<sup>th</sup> December:** The anti-choice group Canadian Centre for Bio-Ethical Reform (CCBR) abandoned its appeal to the Supreme Court of Canada, following its **April 25<sup>th</sup>** loss at the Alberta Court of Appeal. In 2015, the CCBR tried to place a hateful anti-choice ad on buses in the city of Grande Prairie. The city refused, CCBR sued, and the city won. The two strong lower court decisions from Alberta now stand as precedent, giving cities across Canada significant leeway to reject anti-choice ads.
- ❖ **20<sup>th</sup> December:** An anti-choice group's request for the City of Saskatoon to declare a "Respect for Life Week" and fly an anti-choice flag at City Hall was rejected by the City Council by an 8-3 vote. Saskatoon will also review its proclamation policy.