

# Highlights

## of ARCC's work in 2023



Abortion Rights  
Coalition of Canada

**Study reviewing CPC websites:** ARCC published its [major study](#) examining misinformation and deception on the websites of anti-choice “crisis pregnancy centres” (CPCs) on March 8, International Women’s Day. The study was a joint project with the BC Humanist Society.

**CPC Projects Committee:** In June, we convened a team of volunteers to work on eight different projects to counter the influence of “crisis pregnancy centres” (CPCs). Just a few highlights:

- We successfully passed a resolution at the BC NDP convention in October to safeguard sexual health education, as some CPCs are delivering sex-ed in public schools.
- We alerted Hamilton Public Health that the CPC Atwell Centre in Hamilton was claiming to have their endorsement and partnership, forcing the CPC to remove the false info from their website.
- ARCC’s research was instrumental in the denial of almost \$1500 in property tax exemptions for the CPC House of Grace in North Cowichan BC. An ARCC member and another community activist had made presentations to the municipal council.
- A committee member presented on our CPC research and committee work at the Prochoice YQL conference in Lethbridge on Nov 27.

**Graphic flyer regulation:** We were active in the 2023 passage of city bylaws to regulate the delivery of graphic anti-choice flyers, especially the bylaws in Woodstock, Calgary, and St. Catharines. ARCC’s input was also instrumental in persuading Norwich, Oakville, Toronto, and Hamilton to move towards passing a flyer bylaw in 2024, and putting it on the agenda of other cities including Burlington, Mississauga, and Vancouver.

**“Belief-based care denial” research projects:** We worked on two research projects partnering with the University of Ottawa, one studying patient experiences with belief-based care denial (aka “conscientious objection”) of reproductive healthcare, and the other of obstructions to medical assistance in dying.

**Pro-Bono Students Canada projects:** In March, we published UNB law student Caitlin Grogan’s report on [Regulation of Belief-Based Care Denial of Care in Canada](#), looking at regulation and policy around this issue in Canada. We began three new research projects through PBSC in 2023, with three UNB law students. Topics are: charitable tax status of anti-choice groups, the *Canada Health Act* and reproductive healthcare, and allowable limits on freedom of expression. Final reports are expected by March 2024.

**ARCC declared Conservative caucus to be anti-choice:** Because the Conservative caucus voted unanimously in favour of Bill C-311 in June, ARCC declared all Conservative MPs to be anti-choice, including those whom we had previously designated as pro-choice. Bill C-311 would have created an “aggravating circumstance” clause in the Criminal Code to allow for greater penalties when a pregnant person is attacked, but the bill was being leveraged by Conservative MP Cathay Wagantall and the anti-choice movement as a vehicle to restrict abortion and gain fetal rights. Our paper on [Six Reasons to Oppose Bill C311](#) proved to be influential. The bill was defeated with all MPs voting against it except the Conservatives. We issued a [press release](#) in August.

**Hamilton bus ad case intervention:** With the help of pro-bono lawyers, ARCC intervened in a lawsuit launched against the City of Hamilton by the right-wing Association for Reformed Political Action (ARPA). Hamilton had refused to run an inaccurate anti-choice bus ad against sex selection abortion, and ARPA tried to force the city to run it. In November, the Divisional Court of Ontario rejected the anti-choice arguments and gave the City of Hamilton a chance to reconsider the ad because the city's prior reasoning was not sufficient. Hamilton is now properly equipped to refuse the ad using a broader array of justifications including gender equality.

**Canada Summer Jobs:** Priests for Life was declined Canada Summer Jobs funding for 2023, likely due to ARCC's letter that outlined reasons and evidence why they should be denied funding.

**UNIFOR campaign:** ARCC worked with labour union UNIFOR to help launch their Reproductive Justice Campaign on June 5. We gathered information on needed action items in every province related to reproductive justice and shared it with UNIFOR, then promoted the campaign. UNIFOR's campaign included federal and provincial petitions for people to sign that listed sexual and reproductive health and rights needs for each region.

**ARCC Activist Workshop:** Our Fundraising Committee organized the April workshop Demystifying Abortion Doula Support. Speaker Melissa Fuller of Birth Mark explored what abortion doulas are, how they help navigate various barriers to abortion access, and how anyone can start supporting people who are having abortions.

**Social media:** We created a Social Media Team in January 2023. The team opened accounts on TikTok, Mastodon, YouTube, and LinkedIn; started doing Instagram reels; recruited a TikTok volunteer videographer, and published a new Multimedia page on ARCC's website.

**Strategic planning:** We hired a professional to guide us through a strategic planning process, and created a new Strategic Planning Committee. Our goals are to enhance media relations and train spokespeople, build ARCC membership and inclusion, forge more relationships with decision makers, and create stronger volunteer and ally networks.

**Media training:** We hired a professional to develop customized training based on ARCC issues. We trained 14 people and expanded our Media Contact List.

**ARCC inclusivity:** We put out a call for Board applicants and recruited five BIPOC Board members in November. We also worked to make other ARCC teams more diverse.

**Updating key resources:** We regularly updated key ARCC resources and tools that the public and researchers rely on, including our:

- List of abortion clinics and support services
- Current statistics on abortion in Canada
- Detailed lists of over 300 Canadian anti-choice groups
- List of anti-choice MPs
- Papers on abortion-related court decisions and laws and safe access zones
- Position papers (with continued translation into French)
- Compilation of municipal bylaws and policies related to regulation of public messaging, to help us lobby cities to restrict anti-choice messaging