



Abortion Rights  
Coalition of Canada

Coalition pour le droit à  
l'avortement au Canada

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## Anti-Abortion Movement “Too Cozy” with the Conservative Government

VANCOUVER – Canada’s anti-abortion movement has a growing and significant influence on the Conservative government, and that poses a serious danger to abortion rights, says the Abortion Rights Coalition of Canada.

“This week we learned – as we long suspected – that it was the anti-choice movement who was largely responsible for the Conservative government’s decision last year to not fund the International Planned Parenthood Federation (IPPF),” said Joyce Arthur, Executive Director of the Abortion Rights Coalition of Canada. Earlier this month, Conservative MP Brad Trost had told the Saskatchewan Pro-Life Association that their movement’s petitions were “very, very useful” in defunding IPPF, which provides reproductive health services including family planning and abortion in developing countries.

The IPPF has sent in a new funding application that also may not be funded, even though it doesn’t request money for abortion services. “Last year’s scandal over Harper’s G8 maternal health initiative was because the Conservatives adopted the anti-choice movement’s stance against contraception too, as well as abortion. Harper was forced to backtrack a bit on contraception, but we lost the battle on abortion,” said Arthur. “Canada’s decades of foreign aid for safe abortion came to a screeching halt last year because of behind-the-scenes activism by the anti-choice movement and MPs.”

According to a list of anti-choice MPs compiled by ARCC, fully two-thirds of the current Conservative caucus are anti-choice, along with 17% of the Liberal caucus. “These MPs don’t sit around quietly doing nothing,” said Arthur. “Many are hardline anti-choicers, and the Conservatives among them won’t hesitate to challenge their leader by ‘re-opening the debate’ – which is code for recriminalizing abortion. In a majority government especially, Harper will be under tremendous pressure from his Caucus to restrict abortion. His promise not to legislate on the issue may not be enough to withstand that pressure.”

“Further, most anti-choice MPs belong to the Parliamentary Pro-Life Caucus where they plot various ways to restrict abortion, including drafting private member bills and motions – 16 of which have been introduced since the Caucus formed in 1998,” said Arthur. The Caucus was founded by several anti-choice MPs and Campaign Life Coalition, Canada’s national anti-choice

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group. The Coalition continues to work closely with the caucus, as well as persuade other anti-choice MPs to join it. Jason Kenney, now the Minister of Citizenship, Immigration and Multiculturalism, was one of the founding MPs and a first co-chair of the PPLC. Kenney was also a radical anti-abortion activist in his university days.

“The anti-abortion movement is far too cozy with the Conservative government, which means we can’t trust a future Conservative government to protect abortion rights,” concluded Arthur.

Here is ARCC’s list of anti-choice MPs: <http://xrl.us/bju75m>

**NOTE:** Media are invited to attend the media conference on Monday in Toronto to learn more reasons why the Harper government poses a risk to abortion rights. The conference is being hosted by the Toronto Morgentaler Clinic, the Ontario Coalition of Abortion Clinics, and the Abortion Rights Coalition of Canada. For details, see: <http://www.newswire.ca/en/releases/archive/April2011/21/c6159.html>

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