

My name is Josie Luetke, I'm the Director of Education & Advocacy for Campaign Life Coalition. Thank you for humouring me for the third board meeting in a row.

I think all of us have things we'd rather be doing than listening to me yet again, but as the risk of censorship remains, I felt obligated to delegate once more.

**Please reject any changes to Article 7 of the Procedural By-Law on Delegations and Submissions.**

At the August 22<sup>nd</sup> board meeting, the proposed changes to the Procedural By-Law were somewhat downplayed, so they may not seem like a big deal.

However, it was said at that meeting that "the intent is to avoid any sort of broad characterizations of groups, especially that might be protected under the *Human Rights Code*, by portraying an entire group of having certain characteristics."

Prior to the June 20 board meeting, I received a call from a DPCDSB staff member requesting I omit sections of my speech on the Pride flag. The concerns she relayed were very similar – claims that I was broadly generalizing the LGBTQ community.

As I said to her, and then again during the meeting, I was talking about specific individuals – those who had created the Pride flag and its modern-day variations. I did not make generalizations.

Nonetheless, immediately after my delegation, staff were requested to make changes to the By-Law.

I have once again brought a copy of my June speech to request that this board identify any example of my making broad characterizations of a group. And if you cannot do that, I would humbly submit that you recognize that there was an attempt to censor my presentation on a *false* basis.

And this is one of the many problems with censorship: Unless the one doing the censoring is God Himself, then the person doing the censoring is going to make mistakes, including about what constitutes "discrimination." We are fallible.

BUT, if the By-Law is changed, these same attempts at censorship could become more regular and effective, which is of great concern to myself and the 3000+ who have signed CLC's petition to Stop the Plan to Censor Parents at School Board Meetings:

<https://www.campaignlifecoalition.com/petition/id/70>.

You may have not liked what I said about the flag, but I hope you appreciate that we have the constitutional right to freely voice those objections, to criticize the underlying assumptions of "gender identity," and the implications of including "gender expression" as a protected ground.

We have denominational rights, under section 93 of the *Constitution*, which supersede the *Ontario Human Rights Code*, and as Catholics, you should want to exercise those.

Instead of trying to gag delegates, why don't you just express how you disagree?

This is the constructive path forward, which allows the whole community to learn and fosters true respect for differences.

If I've said something wrong, let's talk about it. Explain your perspective, and hopefully we can better understand each other and maybe even find some common ground.

Trying to pre-emptively censor someone, however, out of the public eye, before they've even had the chance to be heard is cowardly, unproductive, and not conducive to the sort of open inquiry necessary for a free, democratic society.

And it's arrogant to believe that, again, fallible staff could make judgments for the whole board about which perspectives are valuable or not.

Do you want to take the risk that any grain of truth, any worthy comment, might be censored?

Legally, it would be prudent to err on the side of free speech, to let all opinions be expressed. The Toronto Catholic District School Board is being sued for weaponizing its *Code of Conduct* to suppress the free speech rights of Trustee Mike Del Grande, and has likely spent \$1,000,000 in lawyer bills already. Don't open yourselves up to similar lawsuits from parents.

You may feel like you could support the changes to Article 7 because they reference the *Ontario Human Rights Code* and you believe they will only be applied to a narrow set of situations.

Let me reiterate then that based on the circumstances that birthed the initial request for revisions to the By-Law, and the subsequent stated intention of "avoiding broad characterizations," the intent of these revisions is to censor presentations like the one I delivered in June. So, no matter the language, no matter what assurances are provided, note that the desire to censor has already been made clear.

And even if you're fine with that, let me also point out that future staff could inherit this By-Law and they may interpret any restrictions much more liberally than staff currently do. Censorship may grow ever more rampant unless you stop it in its tracks.

Let's not go down that path of authoritarianism.

Let's not "fix" what ain't broke.

It's healthy to hear perspectives other than your own. Don't get stuck in an echo chamber. Engage with differing ideas and charitably correct those who have erred in their reasoning.

Does the Dufferin Peel Catholic District School Board wish to teach students critical thinking? Then model it.

So, please reject any changes to the Procedural By-Law on Delegations, even if revised language is proposed.

And again, I invite you to clarify what was it that I said in June that ought to have been censored.

Thank you.