



Alberta's Bill 24 may be setting us up for 'Residential Schools 2.0' but with far greater danger

All stages in life come with problems, but many vouch that adolescence is the toughest. Few trials can match the inevitable onslaughts of self-doubt that descend upon us as we transition from boy to man or girl to woman. Not making matters any easier is the growing awareness of our parents' imperfections. And yet history shows us that, despite their flaws, moms and dads are our best bet in making it through the deep and murky forest of adolescence. Study after study shows that most often it is our family that has our best interests at heart – much more than any other institution. And when this fact is ignored by governments very bad things can happen (case in point: Canada's residential schools). Sadly, Alberta's NDP appear oblivious to the obvious as they blunder on with implementing Bill 24.

The Alberta NDP government brought forward Bill 24 arguing that "every student deserves a welcoming, caring and safe place to learn." This is, of course, a most laudable goal. However, Education Minister Eggen's first speech promoting the

bill failed to mention a single instance from the past that this bill would have remedied. Presumably, Bill 24 is supposed to reduce negative behaviours often associated with homosexuality, such as suicide, running away from home, dropping out of school or drug and alcohol abuse. For the most part, however, these problems are self-inflicted, so in the vast majority of cases the aggressor and victim are essentially one and the same. How setting up gay/straight alliance (or GSA) clubs will reduce these afflictions Mr Eggen failed to say, and the witless media present at this speech similarly failed to press him for such evidence.

What he did say, however, is that “kids sometimes feel safer talking about gender and sexual identity with their peers.” Presumably this means that only “peers” (i.e. other kids) will be present in these clubs. Teachers are needed to oversee students in classrooms, gyms and schoolyards, but when engaging in conversations and activities about sex with other students? Apparently not. Some schools have students from kindergarten through Grade 12. Therefore boys and girls ranging in age from 6 to 16 will be meeting up to explore this most delicate and psychologically-sensitive issue with absolutely no adult supervision at all. What could possibly go wrong?

Either that, or adults will be present, and Minister Eggen, like his handling of the ultra-top-secret new Alberta curriculum, thinks teachers are better equipped to care for children than parents. He appears to believe this even though [nearly 1,300 students fell victim to 714 school teachers and staff across Canada over the last 20 years](#) and often when caught not only receive no jail time at all but get to [keep their teaching licenses](#). This mentality that government knows best is not new and seldom ends well, especially when children are involved. Just ask any of the participants in Canada’s Truth and Reconciliation Commission.

From the commission’s [final report](#):

“In establishing residential schools, the Canadian government essentially declared Aboriginal people to be unfit parents. Aboriginal parents were labelled as being indifferent to the future of their children”

And who did the Canadian government think was better able to care for aboriginal kids? Why agents of the government, of course. What followed over the next century the report goes on to say was the creation of an environment where “child neglect was institutionalized, and the lack of supervision created situations where students were prey to sexual and physical abusers.”

This took place over a hundred years, mostly in an age and environment where discussing sexual matters was considered taboo. Since then we’ve undergone the ‘sexual revolution’ (and right along with it some of the worst sex crimes in modern history, like the [‘Candyman’ who raped, tortured and murdered 30 boys during the 1970s](#)).

The potential for abuse within the cloistered confines of these clubs can come from not only from adult sex predators wanting to worm their way in to groom victims under the guise of guest speakers and longer-term ‘leaders’ but also from the much more likely scenario of older teens bullying younger members.

Foreshadowing of such future abuse has already been brought to our attention this past May when the *Calgary Herald’s* Licia Corbella [interviewed parents of a 14-year-old autistic girl](#) who in the fall of 2016 joined a GSA club unbeknownst to her mother and father. Soon she was being pressured by club members to ‘transition’ into a boy. By Christmas the poor girl was threatening to commit suicide. Only then did the parents become aware of what had been going down in their daughter’s school.

Let’s be clear here. In this first instance it was the parents

that saved the girl—not the school which if anything served only to enable the trauma to take place. In this present age of ridiculously-easy-to-access hard-core pornography and live-streaming rapes Minister Eggen is now forcing into every Alberta school an environment ripe for abuse. With teens (or younger) engaging in sexual issues either completely unsupervised or with adults that parents are not permitted to know about, the potential for harm to our children is far greater than anything our society has ever seen before.

Minister Eggen is setting up a potential powder keg of abuses that will make the residential schools look like child's play. The responsible thing for parents – and all Albertans – is to hold him to account and stop him *before* such travesties occur, not after.

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