

SOCIALLY CONSERVATIVE GROUPS CALL FOR EDUCATION MINISTER'S RESIGNATION OVER SEX-ED CURRICULUM

[12.02.2019 Jessica Smith Cross](#)

A coalition of socially conservative groups is calling on Education Minister **Lisa Thompson** to resign, accusing her of failing to implement Premier **Doug Ford**'s promise to repeal the updated sex-ed curriculum introduced by the former Liberal government in 2015.

The Canadian Families Alliance (CFA) held a press conference Tuesday at a community centre in Thorncliffe Park, which has been a hot spot for protests against the curriculum for years.

The coalition was represented by **Tanya Granic Allen**, a former Progressive Conservative candidate and leadership contestant, who is also the president of Parents As First Educators; **Abdul Rauf Jangda**, director of the Thorncliffe Parents Association; **Jack Fonseca**, director of political operations for Campaign Life Coalition; and **Queenie Yu**, leader of the Stop the New Sex Ed Agenda Party.

While Thompson did issue a directive to school boards this fall replacing the 2015 elementary sex-ed curriculum with a version that includes sex-ed content from 1998, lawyers representing the provincial government have since argued in court and at the Human Rights Tribunal of Ontario that teachers are free to teach information included in that 2015 curriculum and are free to use it as a resource.

Because of that — and because they say issues contained in the modern curriculum such as gender identity and expression are still being taught at some schools — the coalition considers the 2015 curriculum to never have been repealed, according to Granic Allen.

And they're blaming Thompson for that.

"Since being named minister of education Thompson has failed to respect the parents' voice by not repealing the (former premier **Kathleen Wynne**) sex-ed," said Granic Allen. "She has betrayed Doug Ford's commitment to Ontario families that the Wynne sex-ed would be repealed."

The coalition objects to students being taught about what it means to be transgender and Granic Allen said Ford himself had raised concerns about the topic of gender identity being taught in schools, citing [an interview he did almost exactly a year ago](#), then a candidate for the leadership of the Progressive Conservative Party, with **Andrew Lawton**, who was then a radio host in London.

(Ford would go on to win the leadership, appoint Lawton as the PC candidate in London West — [sparking a separate political controversy](#) — and Lawton would ultimately lose his race.)

Lawton read a quote from one of Ford's news releases saying the sex-ed curriculum should be “about facts, not teaching Liberal ideology,” and asked Ford for an example of what in the curriculum wasn’t fact-based. Initially Ford dodged the line of questioning, but Lawton persisted and asked him to “provide one example in that curriculum where you think Liberal ideology has hijacked facts.”

“Can your listeners, and yourself, tell me what the six genders are?” Ford replied.

Granic Allen contrasted that interview with Ford with a quote from Thompson in Question Period, shortly after being named minister, in which she said students should be taught about gender identity.

She also referred to the content of the curriculum as "crazy Marxist nonsense," borrowing a turn of phrase [Ford had used in a PC party fundraising email to describe the activities of student unions](#).

"You know yesterday Premier Doug Ford made me chuckle, actually, when he referenced this 'crazy Marxist nonsense' that student unions get up to in university," she said. "And I thought, well, 'Why has Lisa Thompson not repealed the crazy Marxist nonsense that vulnerable children are being exposed to and subjected to in the classroom?'"

The provincial government has defended its curriculum rollback from challenges at the Divisional Court and the Human Rights Tribunal of Ontario, and decisions by both bodies are expected in the coming months.

Speaking on behalf of Campaign Life Coalition, Fonseca urged Ford to publicly declare that his government will invoke the notwithstanding clause of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms to override the court's decision if the government is ordered to reinstate the 2015 curriculum. He also called on Ford to repeal the human rights tribunal and Ontario Human Rights Commission altogether.

Both Fonseca and Granic Allen spoke about the politics of the issue.

Fonseca said Ford's commitment to repeal the sex-ed curriculum won him the very close leadership race, as without it **Christine Elliott** would have won. His organization signed up thousands of members on the issue who had backed Tanya Granic on the first ballot, and after she was eliminated, almost all of those votes went to Ford, he said.

He also said the issue motivated voters across the province in the June general election and called on Ford to live up to his "promises made, promises kept" slogan in this case.

Meanwhile, Rauf Jangda spoke from the perspective of a parent. He said he'd pulled his three children out of public school over the updated curriculum three years ago, as did many other

parents in Thorncliffe Park, even if they could barely afford tuition. However, he said many parents put their children back into public school when Ford was elected.

"They feel everything is OK," he said. "But we hear from the schools nothing has been changed. I think it was an illusion."

The groups will be holding a rally at Queen's Park calling for Thompson's resignation on Feb. 20.