

## Poorly written law leaves kids at risk

Parents drop their kids off at school expecting them to learn mathematics, reading and writing.

They do not expect their underage children to be ushered off school property during class time – without their knowledge – and provided with over 100 condoms and a disturbingly graphic “how-to” sexual flip book.

During a recent Court of Appeal hearing, it was revealed that this is exactly what has happened in an Alberta school.

Unfortunately, these incidents will likely surface with increasing frequency.

Why?

Because recent changes to provincial law stipulate that sexual content can now be provided to K-12 children without parental notification, so long as the content is provided through certain school clubs and associated school-wide activities.

In fact, even if parents demand to know whether their children have been accessed by off-site facilitators and/or offered sexual resources and paraphernalia through these clubs and

activities, the law clearly states that “the principal is responsible for ensuring that notification, if any, respecting a voluntary student organization or an activity... is limited to the fact of the establishment of the organization or the holding of the activity.” (School Act, section 16.1(6))

Some say this problem is easily remedied by parents simply having conversations with their children, since this information is up to children to share, and not the schools.

Is it now expected that parents must regularly ask their K-12 children whether they have been ushered off school property during class time, accessed by off-site facilitators and/or provided with sexual resources and paraphernalia?

Instead of recognizing the dangers to children and rethinking this poorly written legislation, Premier Notley and the Alberta Teachers’ Association (ATA) tweeted a recent op-ed, which attempted to equate those advocating for parental rights with extremism and hate.

Parents, are you hateful for wanting to be part of your child’s life?

Are you an extremist for objecting to new laws which allow your K-12 child to be exposed to sexual content during school hours without your knowledge?

Why do the NDP and ATA keep trying to misrepresent the issue, stripping nuance out of the discussion and creating a superficial veneer where Albertans feel they must either support this legislation – packaged with enforced secrecy, sexual content exemptions and off-site facilitators accessing K-12 children – or risk being smeared as hateful extremists who don’t care about LGBTQ+ youth getting the support they need?

There is another option: A thoughtful, balanced approach which provides for the needs of vulnerable students in our schools, without compromising their safety, undermining their families or narrowing the resources available for their support. Aren’t LGBTQ+ children in our schools just as deserving of parental involvement, oversight, care and safety as every other child?

It is time for Albertans to demand that the government and ATA put the genuine safety of students before polarizing rhetoric, demonization and shallow talking points. It is time we all courageously engage in a deeper conversation, insisting upon changes to this poorly written legislation, in order to support and protect our children in Alberta schools.

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