



Educational Resources

PARLIAMENTARY COMMITTEE SIMULATION - CLASSROOM HARMONY ACT

Minister and Witness Materials

Anti-Facebook Coalition

Use the brief notes below to help you prepare to make a presentation to the committee. Do not just read out the arguments as they are listed on this sheet. Use them to help you organize what you plan to say, but then do so in your own words. Add your own additional arguments and details that support the same viewpoint.

What is the Anti-Facebook Coalition?

We are a coalition of groups that have grave concerns about the place of Facebook and other similar social media sites in our country. We were formed in 2010, when several small interest groups in different provinces came together to form this national interest group. Our mission is to raise awareness among Canadians about the dangers of social-media and to lobby government to have more controls on this and other social-media sites.

What is our position on the bill?

We support this bill, but we would prefer that social media be banned in classrooms at all times.

What are our arguments?

- Social media sites collect too much personal information about Canadians.
- People — particularly youth — are losing their sense of personal privacy and are sharing potentially damaging information about themselves.
- Allowing social media in the classroom places unfair pressure on students to participate.
- Schools should not be encouraging an activity that can be damaging to privacy and the mental health of youth.

What would we like the committee to do?

- Pass the bill.
- Close the loophole in Section 4(2) that would allow some classes to use social media.

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High School Students' Rights Association

Use the notes below to help you prepare to make a presentation to the committee. Do not just read out the arguments as they are listed on this sheet. Use them to help you organize what you plan to say, but then do so in your own words. Add your own additional arguments that support the same viewpoint.

What is the High School Students' Rights Association?

The HSSRA is an organization that was formed in 1984. It was formed by a group of high-school students in New Brunswick who were concerned that there were laws and school policies that would be overturned if they applied to adults in the workplace instead of teenagers at school. The HSSRA grew to become a national organization, made up of high-school student volunteers and a small staff, including one lawyer and a lobbyist.

What is our position on the bill?

We are opposed to the bill as it is currently written. We believe that classroom rules should be reasonable and determined between a teacher and students. The government should not have the ability to outlaw something that it would not outlaw in the workplaces of adults.

What are our arguments?

- It is not reasonable to deny high-school students the right to do something that university or college students can do.
- Social media can be an important tool for learning.
- Social media is not a dangerous activity as long as students use it within recommended guidelines.

What would we like the committee to do?

- Amend the bill to apply only to students under age 14, enrolled in elementary or middle schools.

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The 3Rs Defence League

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What is the 3Rs Defence League?

The 3Rs Defence League is a special interest group organized by parents and grandparents who prefer traditional teaching methods. We believe that most schools have lax discipline and give students too much freedom. We think that school is for teaching the basics — reading, writing and arithmetic — and for training students to be good workers. We have members across Canada who donate enough money that we can hire a small staff.

What is our position on the bill?

We strongly support the bill.

What are our arguments?

- Schools tend to embrace fads that will become unpopular again in several years.
- Social media is just a fad.
- Schools should concentrate on traditional methods of teaching.
- Allowing students to use social-media in the class will just encourage them to ignore their teacher and disrupt the class.

What would we like the committee to do?

- Pass the bill as written.

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The Federation of Social Media Providers

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What is the Federation of Social Media Providers?

FOSMP is a special-interest group that represents Canadian divisions of major social media sites and internet providers. FOSMP exists to lobby the government to keep social media easily accessible and inexpensive to access in Canada.

What is our position on the bill?

The bill is unnecessary and unfair.

What are our arguments?

- We do our best as social-media providers to make the experience of social media positive, safe and beneficial to our users, including teens.
- Social media is an essential tool in the lives of youth today and should not be banned in the classroom.
- This bill would unfairly harm our industry and our advertisers in Canada.

What would we like the committee to do?

- Defeat the bill.

Minister of Learning

Who is the Minister of Learning?

The Minister of Learning is the cabinet minister in charge of the Department of Learning. While most education issues are a provincial responsibility, the federal government has created a department to promote national programs for education. They include grants for post-secondary students and professors, as well as initiatives that will improve education for students at all levels.

What is my position on the bill?

My government supports this bill. We think it will be helpful for Canadian students and teachers. We would like the committee to work hard to hear the views of Canadians, to review it carefully and to make any amendments that would make the bill even better than it is now.

Introducing the bill

List the key things that this bill will do. You should have approximately five items in your list. Include the types of social media that are banned and the penalties for teachers and students who break the law.

Why should the committee support this bill?

- While social media can be a useful tool in many aspects of the lives of Canadians, it does not belong in our classrooms.
- Teachers should not have to compete with Facebook or Twitter for the attention of students in their classrooms.
- Students should be able to have a break from the social pressures of social media when at school.
- Teachers who would like to use the technology for specific teaching purposes may still do so as long as they follow the proper procedures.