



NEWS RELEASE

British Columbia Civil Liberties Association
October 20, 2009

For immediate release

City tries delay tactics to stall court challenge on bylaws

Vancouver, B.C. – A press release and a letter to the B.C. Civil Liberties Association show that the City is working hard to avoid having controversial anti-free speech bylaw provisions get to Court before the Olympics. Two activists, Chris Shaw and Alissa Westergaard Thorpe, in partnership with the BCCLA, have filed a lawsuit challenging the bylaws.

“We don’t know why the City would wait until the 11th hour, almost literally, to respond to our concerns,” said BCCLA Executive Director David Eby, who believes the City now recognizes the bylaws they’ve passed are unconstitutional. “We’ve had to help activists file a lawsuit to challenge this unconstitutional bylaw before we could be taken seriously. After making a mockery of our concerns in the media, the City now appears to be trying to buy time so that our lawsuit can’t get to court.”

The letter to the BCCLA received late Friday from the City’s legal department says that the court challenge to the Bylaws is “moot” because the City is planning on making unspecified amendments. The press release makes promises that the City will not include provisions that would jail people for posting illegal signs, and suggests that amendments may be “considered” and other sections “clarified” on an indeterminate schedule. The BCCLA has not seen the text of any proposed amendments.

“These bylaws were passed at the last minute, with limited public input,” said Eby. “The time for amendments and consultation was July at the latest, not three months before the Olympics. We don’t have the time or the inclination to wait and see how close the City wants to cut their constitutional duties to protect free speech.” With only three months to go before the Olympics, there is almost no time to get a Court to consider the provisions that were introduced in July, 2009. The lawyers on the lawsuit are finalizing a draft application to shorten timelines so that the matter can get to Court before February 2010.

[Letter from City of Vancouver law department >>](#)

[Letter from BCCLA to City of Vancouver law department >>](#)

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