



## NEWS RELEASE

British Columbia Civil Liberties Association  
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For immediate release

### **Activists call off Olympic free speech lawsuit**

Activists backed by the BCCLA in a lawsuit to protect their free speech rights against Olympic bylaws passed by the City of Vancouver have officially withdrawn their case as a result of amendments made to the bylaw by the City of Vancouver.

"The original signage bylaw passed in July 2009 was an offense to civil liberties," said Chris Shaw, one of the two plaintiffs in the lawsuit. "Our lawsuit caused the city to think more critically about civil liberties in context to the Olympics. The new bylaw, while by no means perfect, is considerably better. This outcome is a significant victory for Charter rights, not only for Olympic protesters, but for all of those who live in this city."

In December, the City of Vancouver passed an amended set of bylaws that changed every section named by Shaw and co-plaintiff Alissa Westergard-Thorpe in their lawsuit. The most contentious part of the bylaw, that banned signs that didn't celebrate the Olympics over huge swaths of the downtown core, was completely deleted.

"Now that we have fought to maintain most of our rights to political expression, the public needs to come out during the Games and voice what the City has tried to silence - dissent around the Olympics," said Westergard-Thorpe.

The B.C. Civil Liberties Association remains concerned about the implementation of various sections of the revised bylaw, and will be watching carefully through its legal observer program to ensure City officials do not infringe the free expression rights of Vancouverites.

#### **MEDIA CONTACTS:**

Dr. Chris Shaw, Plaintiff, 604-875-4111 ext 68373 or cell 604-710-8291

Alissa Westergard-Thorpe, Plaintiff, 778-668-0790

David Eby, Executive Director, BCCLA, 778-865-7997