



Written by [Michael Tennant](#) on October 12, 2012

Ontario Official: Catholic Schools Can't Teach "Misogynistic" Pro-life

The Education Minister of Ontario, Canada — a professing Catholic who sends her children to Catholic schools — declared October 10 that the province's publicly funded Catholic schools may not teach students that abortion is wrong because such teaching amounts to "misogyny," which is prohibited in schools under a controversial anti-bullying law.

"Taking away a woman's right to choose could arguably be considered one of the most misogynistic actions that one could take," Laurel Broten said during a [press conference](#).

"Bill 13," she asserted, "is about tackling misogyny."

Passed in June, [Bill 13](#) requires schools to provide "a positive school climate that is inclusive and accepting, regardless of race, ancestry, place of origin, color, ethnic origin, citizenship, creed, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, age, marital status, family status or disability." The law specifically mandates that schools — [Catholic schools included](#) — establish "gay-straight alliance" organizations. Now, it seems, it will also be used to infringe even further on religious freedom by prohibiting Catholic schools from teaching that abortion is sinful.

Broten, in her capacity as minister responsible for women's issues, had called the press conference "to express [her] disappointment" with a press conference held earlier in the day by three provincial legislators in which they argued that Ontario taxpayers should not be forced to pay for abortions. Those men had the audacity, Broten averred, "to reopen the debate in Ontario about a woman's right to choose" — "a debate ... that has been ended for quite some time." Their press conference, she added, "was frankly disheartening." (Note, by the way, that the legislators were not even talking about banning abortion itself, just public funding of it.)

Asked by a member of the press if it was "appropriate" for Catholic schools to "let kids out of school to go to anti-abortion rallies," Broten said that "in Ontario we support Catholic education, support the teaching of love and tolerance in our Catholic schools and at the same time support a woman's right to choose."

In other words, the government of Ontario — led by pro-choice Premier Dalton McGuinty, who is also a Catholic — supports Catholic education only up to the point where it conflicts with left-wing orthodoxy.

"I am one that supports Catholic education and has been adamantly in support of women's right to choose for many years and I do not see a conflict in those," Broten continued.

It may come as a shock to Broten (and McGuinty), but the [Catechism of the Catholic Church](#) is quite clear on the subject: "Human life must be respected and protected absolutely from the moment of





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conception." Nor does the church consider this merely a private matter: "The inalienable right to life of every innocent human individual is a *constitutive element of a civil society and its legislation*." (Emphasis in original.) It simply is not possible to be a Catholic in good standing and support abortion and its funding by the state.

It is clear, however, that Broten is a "progressive" first and a Catholic second. "The Catholic teachings are one aspect that we teach in our schools," she said, "but we do not allow and we're very clear with the passage of Bill 13 that Catholic teachings cannot be taught in our schools that violates human rights and which brings a lack of acceptance to participation in schools."

She noted approvingly that Bill 13 forced Catholic schools to accept gay-straight alliances "so that students feel safe," and therefore those schools can also be silenced with regard to abortion so that "young girls can make the choices that they make."

"This is not about being pro-abortion," she maintained. "It is about being pro-choice." That "choice," of course, is the one to have an abortion.

One reporter pointed out that Broten seemed to have gone off on a tangent, observing that "Bill 13 had nothing to do with, or didn't say anything about pro-life or pro-choice, abortion, anything about that. I don't quite understand why you're bringing it up."

Broten replied:

Bill 13 has in it a clear indication of ensuring that our schools are safe, accepting places for all our students. That includes LGBTQ students. That includes young girls in our school. Bill 13 is about tackling misogyny. Taking away a woman's right to choose could arguably be one of the most misogynistic actions that one could take.

("LGBTQ" was probably shorthand for Bill 13's original formulation of "LGBTTIQ," which stands for "lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, transsexual, two-spirited, intersex, queer and questioning.")

Thus, merely stating in a Catholic school the church's opposition to abortion is, in Broten's opinion, misogynistic and must be banned.

But as William Saunders, senior vice president of legal affairs for Americans United for Life told [LifeSiteNews.com](#), "It can't be misogynistic to oppose something that is so harmful to women, as many recent studies show."

"That's the dirty secret about abortion — how harmful it is to women; and so to suggest it's misogynist is to completely miss the point," he added.

Also, as Faye Sonier, legal counsel for the Evangelical Fellowship of Canada, told the website: "A 2012 Ipsos Reid poll found that 60% of Canadians support the introduction of legislation that would limit abortion access.... Are a majority of Canadians therefore misogynistic?"

"If Bill 13 were interpreted in the way the Minister suggests, in my opinion, it would be unconstitutional as offending freedom of religion, freedom of conscience and free speech, as well as contrary to parents' obligations and rights with respect to their children, and so on," Dr. Margaret Somerville, the founding director of McGill University's Center for Medicine, Ethics and Law told LifeSiteNews.com.

Now, one could argue that government control over an organization's activities, even at the expense of religious freedom, is the price that organization pays for accepting state funding; and certainly Ontario's Catholic schools are more vulnerable to such assaults as a result of their being publicly



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funded. However, a representative of the Ontario Human Rights Commission, testifying in favor of Bill 13 before a legislative committee in May, [said](#), “All schools, including *public, Catholic and private*, have a legal duty to provide students with an educational environment free from harassment and other forms of discrimination because of their race, ancestry, place of origin, color, ethnic origin, citizenship, creed, sexual orientation, age, marital status, family status or disability and sex including gender identity.” (Emphasis added.) This indicates that at least some officials intend to enforce Bill 13 on private schools as well, thereby infringing on their rights, too.

What Broten’s remarks — and, indeed, the entirety of Bill 13 — boil down to is this: The radical left doesn’t merely want to *win* debates over public policy; it wants to *prohibit* any debate in the first place. This is why Broten and other pro-abortion types were up in arms that other legislators were even bringing up the subject of abortion. (“We find that very sad,” legislator Cheri DiNovo, a minister in the United Church of Canada, told the [Canadian Press](#). “This is 2012. We should be beyond that discussion.”)

Unless Ontarians get up the gumption to take on these tyrants, they may soon find that the only thing left to debate is which of their liberties will be trampled next.



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