

Editorial ? Does anyone really benefit from political attack ads?

A Liberal MP, Kevin Lamoureux from Winnipeg, has put forth a private member's bill that would require party leaders to stand by and take responsibility for advertisements they issue. That would apply for attack ads too.

There have to be some serious questions asked as to whether attack ads help the political process, or is it more accurate to say they bring the process into scorn?

It is true that despite all the high sounding ideals that those in politics offer us, the world in which they live is really a game of proverbial hard ball. That means there are going to be cheap shots, as well as the ones that legitimately raise issues that need to be addressed. It is also true that some people have a hard time telling the difference between the legitimate and the cheap. And it's also true that if a politician or political movement cannot deal with harsh, and even undeserved criticism, they should find some other line of endeavour to devote their time to.

But if we think of the track record of attack ads, one can find two sides. They can sometimes work, but that's not always the case. Recall the 1993 federal election, when the Progressive Conservatives put out an ad making reference to the facial paralysis of then Liberal Leader Jean Chretien. History records that strategy backfired, big time.

Perhaps we don't need legislation to control attack ads. Maybe what we need is political leadership that thinks before it acts. But there are some who might argue we're really dreaming.