

National Affairs by Claire Hoy ? Mouthy minority silences politicians

The late great Yankees' catcher Yogi Berra said it best: ?It's déjà vu all over again.?

Or, like the classic Bill Murray comedy, it's Groundhog Day forever.

Every time government succumbs to one lobby or another and brings in new legislation, it faithfully promises to look after the legitimate interests of people who, often for deeply-held moral beliefs, have serious concerns.

Yet, through a combination of unelected activist judges, continued pressure from special interest groups, and widespread support from the media, those whose views are not in synch with the new realities inevitably get trampled upon.

Examples abound. Recall when Ontario first introduced the one-sided Ontario Human Rights Commission, for example, with the solemn promise that the unelected and committed commissioners would be restricted to issues affecting housing and employment. Well, that didn't last long. There is barely an element in our lives where the human rights apparatchiks haven't injected themselves into, thanks to a system where the old idea of innocence until proven guilty has been literally turned on its head.

In another area, after the Supreme Court ruled that the law covering abortion was unconstitutional ? and ordered Parliament to redraft it ? Brian Mulroney's government took a stab at it, which lost on a tie vote (because Mulroney wouldn't allow his ministers to vote their conscience, and the ministers opted for a car and driver over what they professed they believed in), Canada became the only democracy in the world without any abortion restrictions whatsoever. None.

Worse. Not only have politicians been too frightened by the mouthy minority and their champions in the media to take another run at it ? despite polls consistently showing most Canadians think there should be some limits on abortion, particularly after the first term ? an elected politician can't even discuss the issue or utter the word ?abortion? without being shamed by the twitter universe, the mainstream media, and other politicians. Not to mention to well-financed pro-abortion activists out there, who falsely paint any discussion of the rights of the unborn as an unwarranted attack on women, even though polls, for what they worth, show that women are as inclined to favor limited restrictions on abortion as men are.

Ontario's College of Physicians and Surgeons (CPSO), you may recall, issued a 2008 policy statement ? currently under review ? which, as National Post columnist Barbara Kay aptly described it, was designed to threaten doctors who, for moral reasons won't perform abortions, ?with aggressive Human Rights Commission retaliation for failing to co-operate with abortion provision or referrals.? This, despite the fact, there is no shortage of doctors quite willing to perform abortions on demand.

The same dictatorial policies are currently at play in a recent case before the Ontario Superior Court where five doctors and three physicians' organizations want the CPSO to soften its official policy and give doctors the constitutional right to refuse what is neatly called ?medical aid in dying? (MAID), a polite way of describing government-sanctioned death by doctor.

Again, when the issue of euthanasia was being debated, those with legitimate moral concerns were assured that (like abortion) no doctor would be forced to stick a needle into a patient and kill them. Well, predictably, that didn't last long. A decision in this case is expected later this year.

Funny thing. Social activists ? who continually call for inclusiveness, but are never willing to include those who don't agree with them ? conveniently ignore the fact that some of the countries they love to point to as examples of socialist Utopia, such as Norway and Denmark, in fact allow exceptions for conscientious objectors, yet have no difficulty delivering the services in question.

Then there's Sweden. As Kay points out, ?If the CPSO were a country, it would be Sweden.? She tells the tale of Swedish midwife Ellinor Grimmark, a devout Christian, who was professionally blacklisted there for her pro-life beliefs. Despite the fact Sweden is desperately short of midwives, she was denied the right to practise (and even offered professional counselling to ?overcome? her Christian views). In January, a Swedish television segment described her as emblematic of ?a global wave of oppression against women.? She was forced to move to Norway, where she is allowed to practise and at the same time hold true to her own moral code, with no harm whatsoever to the system of abortions there.

Next time a politician tells you that you can stay true to yourself ? kind of like Barack Obama assuring Americans they could keep their doctors and enjoy lower health fees ? don't believe them.

If you're looking for truth, searching Parliament or the Legislatures is the wrong place to find it.

