

From: Vellacott, Maurice
Sent: August 15, 2008 4:39 PM
To: 'afoti@cpsso.on.ca'
Subject: Response to new draft OCPS policy impacting conscience rights of physicians

HOUSE OF COMMONS
CANADA

Maurice Vellacott, MP
Saskatoon-Wanuskewin

August 15, 2008

Andréa Foti
College of Physicians and Surgeons of Ontario
80 College Street
Toronto, Ontario
M5G 2E2

Dear Ms. Foti,

Canadian physicians have enjoyed a measure of freedom of conscience that other health care workers do not enjoy. I have been attempting to remedy that situation for many years through a piece of legislation that would secure this Constitutional freedom for all health care workers. The latest version of this legislation can be found on Canada's Parliamentary website as Private Member's Bill C-537, and which I've also attached.

Section 2 of Canada's Charter of Rights and Freedoms guarantees freedom of conscience for all Canadians. It is a tragedy and an embarrassment that provinces across Canada do not secure freedom of conscience for nurses, medical students and pharmacists.

It would be scandalous if Ontario, backed by its Human Rights Tribunal, chose to attempt to roll back this freedom of conscience for physicians as well. I hope that the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Ontario would not choose to prematurely concede to an anticipated order from the Tribunal to repeal physicians' fundamental rights in Ontario.

In recent months Canada has witnessed a much more robust public debate about human rights than we have seen in many years. Ontario Human Rights officials are aware of this debate. It is clear that modern, Constitution-affirming Canadians recognize freedom of conscience as a fundamental human right. You would be on the right side of the issue if you also advanced and vigorously defended that position – for physicians and all other health care workers in Ontario.

Yours sincerely,

Original signed by

Maurice Vellacott, MP
Saskatoon-Wanuskewin