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**COMMENTS**

Concerns with Bill C-11

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Bill C-11, legislation to regulate online platforms, is once again before Parliament. This Bill is virtually identical to the controversial Bill C-10 from the previous Parliament, which was abandoned by last year's election. Bill C-11 is equally as contentious and has been dubbed by some 'Canada's Censorship Bill'.

To make matters worse, this past week the Liberal/NDP coalition continued to show their disdain for democracy by voting to limit House of Commons debate on Bill C-11. By so doing, the serious concerns and massive impact this legislation will have on how Canadians develop and access online content, have effectively been disregarded. Bill C-11 will make all Internet hosting platforms, including Facebook, Instagram, YouTube and TikTok, follow content rules required for traditional broadcasters such as specified amount of local content and contributing to cultural funds. Concern with the legislation, however, is the potential to permit government to regulate audio or audio-visual content online, including podcasts, audiobooks and sports streaming services. Most concerning is that it covers

user-generated content uploaded to any social media service. Think government scrutiny of your Facebook or Instagram posts.

Experts in the field of Internet law, including Canada research Chair on Internet and E-commerce law, and University of Ottawa law professor Dr. Michael Geist, have been critical of the legislation dating back to its original version in 2020. He has stated, "Bill C-11 maintains no specific thresholds or guidance...., the entire audio-visual world is fair game, and it will be up to the CRTC to decide whether to exempt some services from regulation."

This would mean having the government-appointed body of the CRTC in charge of deciding who they regulate without any legislative guidance. "The potential scope for regulation is virtually limitless since any audio-visual service anywhere with Canadian subscribers or users is caught by the rules."

The Liberal government has repeatedly denied that regulating individual users creating content is part of the Bill's scope. Yet, just days ago during questioning before the Standing Committee on Canadian Heritage hearings related

to the Bill, Chair of the CRTC in fact stated, "As constructed, there is a provision that would allow us to do it as required." Although he stressed that the CRTC is not interested in regulating user content, his statement is clear confirmation that Bill C-11 does cover user generated content, indicating that the government has been less than truthful on its intent.

The federal government continues to ignore concerns expressed by law advocates and Canadians in general. Based on recent Liberal history, there are valid reasons to believe that government overreach, this time Internet censorship, is a very real possibility. Canadians should never underestimate what this government is willing to do, including censorship, with the power generated through poorly crafted legislation.

I believe C-11 is dangerous legislation, brought forward by a dangerous Liberal government, drunk on its own power. If you have concerns with this Bill, do not wait until it passes in the House of Commons to raise your concerns, do it now. Contact Heritage Minister Pablo Rodriguez directly at e-mail: pablo.rodriguez@parl.gc.ca

call:1-613-995-0580.

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