



West Coast LEAF NEWS ALERT June 16, 2008

West Coast LEAF expands the debate around Bountiful

In a new policy statement, the board of West Coast LEAF noted that it is not only the practice of polygamy that is a concern in the fundamentalist Mormon community in Bountiful British Columbia.

West Coast LEAF has identified a list of possible illegal activities in the community, such as breaches of the Employment Standards Act, the Safety Standards Act and other sections of the Criminal Code including Assault and Sexual assault.

The full list of other possible illegal activities includes breaches of the following:

- 2.3.1 Employment Standards Act
- 2.3.2 Safety Standards Act
- 2.3.3 Independent School Act
- 2.3.4 Immigrant and Refugee Protection Act
- 2.3.5 Worker's Compensation Act
- 2.3.6 Income Tax Act
- 2.3.7 Employment and Assistance Act
- 2.3.8 Family Relations Act
- 2.3.9 Divorce Act
- 2.3.10 Marriage Act
- 2.3.11 Other sections of the Criminal Code such as:
 - 2.3.11.1 S. 151 Sexual interference
 - 2.3.11.2 s. 152 Invitation to sexual touching
 - 2.3.11.3 s. 153 Sexual exploitation
 - 2.3.11.4 s. 170 Parent or Guardian procuring sexual activity
 - 2.3.11.5 s. 265 Assault
 - 2.3.11.6 s. 271 Sexual assault
 - 2.3.11.7 s. 294 Unlawful solemnization of marriage

As experts on *Charter* rights, West Coast LEAF also asserts,

"The *Charter of Rights and Freedoms* is written and has been interpreted by the Supreme Court of Canada as creating a positive obligation on the governments of Canada to protect women from patterns of historical disadvantage. [We] believe that this obliges the government of BC to ensure that women have the information and resources they need to leave Bountiful to

fully exercise their rights as Canadian citizens."

West Coast LEAF has long been a part of the dialogue around polygamy practiced by the fundamentalist Mormon community in Bountiful British Columbia. Most recently, a letter was sent to the Attorney General of British Columbia supporting the move to a reference question on the subject.

Open letter to Prime Minister Harper re. violence against Aboriginal women

Dear Prime Minister:

West Coast LEAF would like to show its support for the [Native Women's Association of Canada](#) in its efforts to bring national attention to the increasing number of Aboriginal Women reported missing or found dead across Canada.

Its ongoing campaign, [Sisters In Spirit](#), designed to address violence against Aboriginal women as a result of gendered, racialized and sexualized violence, would be more successful with the support of the Conservative government if substantial help were given.

We urge the federal government to support NWAC by creating a special National RCMP Investigation Unit to assist NWAC in developing policies for local police and RCMP on how to address issues of "discrimination, lack of access to justice and sexualized violence".

Recent reports of the finding of human remains of two young Aboriginal women who were soon to be mothers have frustrated and troubled members of West Coast LEAF.

Our mandate is to speak out against discrimination and ensure all women are treated equally. Given that there is clear evidence that Aboriginal women are far more likely to be reported missing, victimized and/or killed[1], we suggest that the government make this issue a priority, as under the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms* every woman has a right to be treated "equal before and under the law and has the right to the equal protection and equal benefit of the law without discrimination".

If you have any questions regarding this issue, please contact West Coast LEAF at 604-684-8772 or info@westcoastleaf.org

Sincerely,

Jan O'Brien
Board Member of West Coast LEAF
Chair of the Law and Government Liaison Committee

[1] http://www.nwac-hq.org/en/documents/SISLiteratureReview_March2008_Final.pdf

About [West Coast LEAF](#)

West Coast LEAF works to realize this vision of women's full equality through public legal education, strategic litigation, and law reform.

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