



**West Coast LEAF  
NEWS ALERT  
May 6, 2008**

**West Coast LEAF supports LEAF National's Position Statement regarding Bill C-484 (commonly known as "The Unborn Victims of Crime Act")**

Both LEAF and West Coast LEAF, along with other equality-seeking organizations, are closely monitoring the progress of Private Member's [Bill C-484](#), commonly known as The Unborn Victims of Crime Act.

On December 13th 2007, Conservative MP Ken Epp tabled Bill C-484, "An Act to amend the Criminal Code (injuring or causing the death of an unborn child while committing an offense)". Bill C-484 would amend the Criminal Code to allow charges to be laid in the death of an "unborn child" if the mother is a victim of violent crime.

On March 5, Bill C-484 passed Second Reading in the House of Commons. Four Conservative MPs voted against the Bill, while 27 Liberal MPs and one of the 19 elected New Democratic MPs voted for it. The Bill passed by a vote of 147-132.

Bill C-484 has now moved to the House of Commons Standing Committee on Justice and Human Rights. Given the voting record of that committee's [members](#), there is a roughly even split of members who voted for and voted against the Bill in the House.

There is growing concern and opposition to the Bill among a number of equality-seeking groups. The implications of this Bill are significant for women's equality and could affect women's access to abortion.

"Bill C-484 appears to be little more than an attempt to grant legal person status to fetuses." says Audrey Johnson, LEAF National's Executive Director. "It fails to provide any substantial measures to address violence against women, including pregnant women."

[LEAF National](#) has issued the following Position Statement, which is supported by West Coast LEAF:

LEAF opposes Bill C-484 because it is little more than an attempt to

grant legal person status to unborn fetuses, while failing to provide any substantial measures to address violence against women, including pregnant women. The implications of this Bill are significant for women's equality and could affect women's access to abortion.

LEAF is concerned about the pervasiveness of male violence against women and children in Canadian society. Pregnant women can be particularly vulnerable to acts of physical and emotional violence. Bill C-484 does not achieve the aim of taking seriously violence against women and does not add any meaningful legal remedies to those already present in the criminal law to address violence against pregnant women. When a pregnant woman is abused or killed, loss of the fetus is harm to the pregnant woman herself. This harm can be considered an aggravating feature in sentencing.

Equality advocates have identified systemic causes of violence against women and proffered a wide range of meaningful solutions to those causes, such as adequate financial security for women and children trying to leave abusive situations, more stable funding and education opportunities for women with children, and better training for police, lawyers and judges and better funding for transition houses and women's groups serving the needs of abused women. If this or any other Canadian government was serious about addressing violence against women, including pregnant women, it would look to the wealth of recommendations made over the years by a range of community-based organizations with expertise in assisting women and children victims of violence.

LEAF has also issued a press release and will present a brief to the committee reviewing Bill C-484 to ensure that an equality analysis of it is available for consideration.

LEAF is a signatory to the [Statement in Opposition to Bill C484, which is posted on the Abortion Rights Coalition of Canada website](#).

## **For more information**

[Abortion Rights Coalition of Canada "Talking Points" against Bill C-484](#)

[Ken Epp, Member of Parliament for Edmonton-Sherwood Park](#). Ken Epp is the Conservative MP who initiated Bill C-484.

[Pro-choice group claims poll skims over link between Bill C-484 and abortion, Georgia Straight, March 20, 2008](#)

[Quebec doctors' federation joins fight against bill for 'unborn victims of crime', CBC News, Wednesday, April 16, 2008](#)

[Let's focus on protecting women, Ottawa Citizen, April 26, 2008](#)

### **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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