

Letter to the Standing Committee on Justice Policy in the Legislative Assembly of Ontario regarding Bill 218

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Good day:

I am writing to the committee in opposition to the proposed Bill 218. The passage of this bill would be a great detriment to the people of Ontario.

The first schedule gives broad immunity to civil liability from people who are infected with COVID-19 since March 19, 2019. This is incredibly unfair to the people of Ontario as it effectively eliminates accountability during the pandemic. Organizations such as hospitals, long term care facilities and government agencies would be immune from civil action in events of malpractice, negligence and other torts. This is being implemented at time where numerous outbreaks at these facilities are currently under investigation.

This is unacceptable under the rule of law. No person is above the law in a democratic society, and this does not change during a pandemic. Any person who causes another to get infected with COVID-19 out of negligence should be held accountable in a court of law. Instituting immunity from liability does not help anyone, and only ensures that instances of negligence in this pandemic do not get met with proper justice.

The second schedule repeals the ability for municipal governments to use ranked ballots in their elections. This repeal is something that no one has asked for. Ranked ballots are evidently superior to the current plurality system, and thousands of citizens have campaigned in favour of this democratic reform for years. It has been used in London in the 2018 election, and is currently undergoing the public consultation process in Toronto, Kingston and Cambridge to be implemented in the next election.

Even the ruling Progressive Conservative party uses ranked ballots for their leadership elections, which makes this repeal incredibly hypocritical. Yet the government has decided to arbitrarily and unilaterally stop the democratic reform process against the will of the people. This move is utterly baffling as no one has asked for this change and even the PC party uses the very same system that they are trying to stop municipalities from using. The government should not interfere with democracy in such an authoritarian and covert manner.

In conclusion, this act would severely damage both accountability and democracy in Ontario, which is why the committee should not continue with Bill 218.