

s.22

To: The Honourable Christy Clark, Premier of British Columbia

May 22, 2011

Dear Premier Clark,

I have been very concerned with the recent number of appointments to the Senate of Canada that have been made by Prime Minister Stephen Harper. A great many of them have been seem to have a much closer loyalty to the Conservative Party of Canada than to the people of the provinces whom they are supposed to be representing.

Prime Minister Harper has always advocated an elected Senate. Mr. Harper and has asked the provinces that until constitutional changes can be made, that they consider holding elections for their Senators, whom he could then appoint to the Senate in the case of a vacancy.

No provinces except Alberta have yet held Senator-in-waiting elections. With the exception of Senator Bert Brown from Alberta, none of the 38 Senators that the prime minister has appointed in the last year have received a mandate from the people in the province that they are meant to represent.

The prime minister has stated recently that unless the provinces are willing to co-operate and set up Senator-in-waiting elections, then he has little choice but to continue the appointments until such time as the Constitution is amended; which could very well be never.

I would like for you to raise this issue as a top priority at the next Council of the Federation meeting. Whether the Council agrees for each province to set up Senator-in-waiting elections, or agrees to some other measure, it is essential that the provinces be unified in their approach to making representation in the Senate more democratic. The status quo is undemocratic, and the provinces have an essential role in fixing this problem.

Please do your part to ensure that British Columbians' representatives in the Upper House of Canada are truly representing of the people of British Columbia, and not simply representing the Prime Minister and/or party that put them there.

Sincerely,

s.22



June 2, 2011

s.22

Dear s.22

Thank you for your letter regarding the Canadian Senate. I did make a comment about this earlier this week. I believe the best of the options is to abolish the Senate -- although I don't think it's a real option for this country because of the way constitutional reform works. So, the second best option is to make sure that British Columbia's senators are truly representing British Columbia and I think the best way to do that is to elect them.

I have noted your concerns and your recommendation on how best to move forward. I just want you to know that I very much appreciate receiving your comments and they will be included in related discussions.

It was good to hear from you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, which appears to read "Christy Clark". The signature is fluid and cursive.

Christy Clark  
Premier



-----Original Message-----

From: s.22  
Sent: Thursday, June 23, 2011 10:14 PM  
To: OfficeofthePremier, Office PREM:EX  
Subject: New Message from Christy Clark Premier website

Someone has filled out the form on the Christy Clark Premier website. Below are the details.

Message for: premier@gov.bc.ca

Senders Name: s.22

Email Address: s.22

Message: I have a comment/suggestion about senate reform. I support senate reform fully, but wonder how many more election campaigns and trips to the polls we will be plagued by if 104 senators have to get elected individually when a senate seat becomes available averaging 1 election/month in any given region in the country; not to mention federal, provincial, and municipal elections. This seems like quite a tedious routine to get into, that could lead to even further declines voter turnouts.

My suggestion is this:

Should the election of senators be left to the legislatures of provincial parliaments? After all they are our elected representatives. They can elect a senator much the same way a speaker of the house is elected. Individual members put forth nominations when a vacancy comes up. Constituents who feel strongly about certain candidates press their MPP's to tell them who to vote for. They discuss, debate, interview potential candidates, then vote. The winner is announced and the Prime Minister thus appoints the elected individual to the senate.

There you go. Simple, easy, elected, competent, etc.  
Thoughts?

s.15

User IP Address: s.22

Date Submitted: Jun-23-2011 10:13 pm

-----Original Message-----

From: s.22  
Sent: Saturday, June 25, 2011 7:32 AM  
To: McGaw, Danna R PREM:EX  
Subject: Re: Canadian Senate Reform

To the Premier's Office

While the Premier was in Ottawa, I noticed one important thing the Premier missed.

We still do not have consensus among the Premiers across the country.

Any reform must include this. It cannot without.

Premier Christy Clark is in a unique position here at this crucial time.

Of all the Premiers, she is the only one that I believe can build this consensus.

Not only do the people of British Columbia need her, so do all Canadians.

Regards,

s.22

Thank you for your kind message; it is appreciated and will be shared with the Premier at our earliest opportunity.  
It was good of you to write.



From: s.22  
Sent: Saturday, June 25, 2011 1:38 PM  
To: Christy@christyclark.ca  
Subject: Your Endorsement of Harper's Position on the Senate was a Major Blunder and a Missed Opportunity

Hi Christie,

Stephen Harper has forgotten his roots; he was elected in 1993 as a Reform MP who admittedly didn't always see eye to eye with Preston Manning on all issues, but I believe he embraced one of the key planks of the Reform party platform, a EEE Senate, a Senate that was elected, that represented the provinces in proportion to their demographic and economic clout, and above all a Senate that was effective.

The Senate has had well over a hundred years to clean up its act and perform some useful function in this country. It remains a lazy, corrupt, stultifying bureaucracy stuffed with patronage appointees who often don't even bother to show up.

Christie Clark, however, seems only concerned with the fact that her province doesn't get a fair slice of the pie when it comes to representation! That's a no brainer for crying out loud; each senator from PEI represents a population of 33,962, whereas each BC senator represents a population of 685,581. Isn't Christy Clark even remotely concerned with the fact that when it comes to shaping and directing a modern Canada, the Senate is about as relevant as the British Royal Family?

So far you have been very lucky; you won the party leadership and the Point Grey byelection by the skin of your teeth, and the NDP have obliged by doing what they do oh so well, shooting themselves in the foot (appointing Adrian Dix - Glen Clark's bootlick - as leader and welcoming Carole James back to the fold!). Your luck may not hold out much longer; isn't it time you made a bold and decisive move that proves to the electorate that you are your own person and are responsive to the wishes of the people? Forget about proportional representation, demand national a referendum on the abolition of the Senate.

regards, s.22

If you require further evidence of the political climate change regarding the Senate, compare exhibits 1 and 2 below.

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Exhibit 2: This is what Barbara Yaffe Published on this topic in her Vancouver Sun editorial last Tuesday (June 21, 2011).

Barbara Yaffe: Bring on a Senate referendum

VANCOUVER — If Canadians got to vote on how to allocate \$100 million in public spending, it's possible not a single taxpayer would opt to keep funding the Senate.

And that notion, at last, could provide an answer to the century-old conundrum of how to get rid of Canada's red chamber, a barnacle on the backside of government, an institution that cheats provinces such as B.C. and Alberta of their rightful share of influence in this country. It's widely acknowledged, a real Senate fix requires constitutional change that has become a no-go zone for Canada. But if a national referendum were held and, say, 80 per cent voted for abolition, the question would be all but resolved.

With clear public support for killing the upper house, even premiers of the smaller provinces, enjoying unfair Senate clout, no longer would have the moral authority to champion the red chamber.

The referendum idea, being floated by New Democrats, comes as the Harper government tabled legislation in the House of Commons Tuesday on Senate reform.

It provides for nine-year term limits for \$132,000-a-year senators who now enjoy lifetime jobs.

It also establishes a non-binding framework for Senate elections that would be held by amenable provinces, providing candidates a prime minister could then crown — if he chose.

The legislation is fraught with problems.

Few provinces would hold elections. Several oppose the notion, fearing a transfer of influence away from their own provincial cabinets to the red chamber.

Other provinces frown on the expense involved. Quebec Intergovernmental Affairs Minister Pierre Moreau says: "It is clear for us that any change that would be made without the consent of the provinces would imply that we would go to the Court of Appeal here in Quebec."

Meanwhile, Ontario and B.C. premiers are on record favouring abolition.

Complicating matters further, Senate elections inevitably would give a measure of political legitimacy to the upper house. This is problematic for B.C., historically denied its rightful share of Senate seats. B.C.'s priority would be fixing the skew in representation before any other reform is undertaken.

Public sentiment about the Senate was well expressed recently by Liberal MP Scott Andrews, from Newfoundland and Labrador: "The Senate is a total waste of money. It has lost all credibility. It is archaic. And it's time for a change, and that change is to get rid of it." He's right, particularly about the loss of credibility.

Canadians were dismayed in the late 1990s to hear about one senator, Andrew Thompson, who had taken off to live in La Paz, Mexico. Another, Raymond Lavigne, was sent to prison last week for defrauding the public purse.

Then there was the absurd case of three defeated Conservative candidates in the May 2 election being appointed to the senate by Stephen Harper.

The bottom line for taxpayers surely is: What substantive benefit does the Senate bring to Canadians?

It's not clear senators provide any substantive benefit. What they do, for the most part, is ensure passage of government bills — a task that could be accomplished by a popinjay.

The drill is as follows. Successive leaders appoint loyal partisans in sufficient number to ensure bills get easy Senate passage.

The question of whom senators are ultimately loyal to — Canadians, or their own party — was answered a few days back, when a letter from Conservative Senator Bert Brown was leaked:

"Every senator in this caucus needs to decide where their loyalty should be, and must be. The answer is simple; our loyalty is to the man who brought us here."

Bring on the referendum vote.



From: s.22  
Sent: Thursday, June 30, 2011 7:40 AM  
To: OfficeofthePremier, Office PREM:EX  
Subject: re senate reform

HON. C. Clark:

I find your remarks regarding more Senate seat for B.C. and how to acquire them lacking intelligence.

Apparently by your own admission, via your email profile, you attended first rate schools (Poli Sci etc.) but as the Premier of the province you don't really seem to have a grasp of the Canadian process. The Senate is a constitutional and Parliamentary entity and cannot be changed in order to satisfy just one provinces representation. It must be changed to reflect fairness for all provinces and territories. There is a lessening of sovereignty in Quebec over the last number of years. Lets not stir the pot up again and see another referendum because a Premier or two wants to change it for their own Provinces' benefits.

One misquote can be overlooked but you made several on the same subject on the same day, making it very evident that you have little grounding about how B.C. should be represented in the Senate as a constitutional matter, or what is really in the constitution. I would wonder how the Prime Minister viewed your abilities when you seem to make those kind of statements to him, as well as publicly, never mind the rest of us.

I was more than happy to see the end of G. Campbell, but one of the legacies he left was his ability to work with the Federalists. He had his sources and his policy papers at hand when he went to see the PM or sat in first minister conferences. He was diplomatic and knew his subject. You need to do the same. Perhaps do a bit more reading instead of making a lot of announcements that really are just window dressing to remove G. Campbell's stamp on the present B.C. govt.

In closing you have a lot of power and are paid a very decent amount of money, I expect the Premier of this province to be well versed when speaking in public ( and you really lobbied hard for the job as well). You no longer speak as a radio pundit. You are paid to speak for the voter exclusively, and represent us with sound knowledge. Yes you must also be able to accept criticism, that goes with the job.

Traditionally eastern Canada held the west in contempt because they viewed us as a bunch of bumptious wantabes (i.e. Vander Zalm and his ilk), and out west to boot. Don't promote that again.

Remember the duration of Kim Campbells' tenure in Ottawa. Short very short. That is a good possibility if you keep this up.

Sincerely  
s.22

Pages 10 through 11 redacted for the following reasons:

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