



# ANNUAL REPORT

2025



Dedicated to defending the  
constitutionally protected  
rights and freedoms of  
Canadians

[theccf.ca](https://theccf.ca)

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# CANADIAN CONSTITUTION FOUNDATION

The Canadian Constitution Foundation (CCF) is a national and non-partisan charity.

We are dedicated to defending the constitutionally protected rights and freedoms of Canadians, and to maintaining Canada's constitution, including its federal structure and division of powers, as intended in the *Constitution Act, 1867*.

Our charitable registration number is:  
86617 6654 RR0001.

The CCF is also registered as a 501(c)(3) public charity with the US Internal Revenue Agency.

# OUR MANDATE

The CCF is dedicated to defending the constitutionally protected rights and freedoms including:

## INDIVIDUAL FREEDOMS

*(Section 2 of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms):*

- Freedom of conscience and religion
- Freedom of thought, belief, opinion, and expression
- Freedom of peaceful assembly
- Freedom of association

## LIBERTY

*(Section 7 of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms):*

The right to life, liberty and security of the person.

## EQUAL OPPORTUNITY

*(Section 15 of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms):*

The right to equality before the law for all individuals.

## FEDERALISM

*(Sections 91, 92 and 92A of the Constitution Act, 1867):*

Defend the federal division of powers between Parliament and the Provinces. Minimize government overreach that upsets the constitutional compromise reached by Canada's Fathers of Confederation.



We defend rights and liberties other groups often ignore.

**Litigation Director  
Christine Van Geyn**

# Foreword

Over the past year, the Canadian Constitution Foundation expanded its reach, playing a leading role in shaping the future of constitutional rights in Canada.

In 2025, the Canadian Constitution Foundation exposed a hidden crisis: local governments across Canada systematically dismantling free speech rights through restrictive bylaws. While continuing our fight against federal and provincial overreach, we turned our attention to the municipal level – where constitutional rights often face their greatest threats.

We examined speech-restricting laws from more than 80 municipalities for our inaugural annual report, *Canada's Most Censorious Bylaws*, and found cities and towns all over the country passing bylaws to restrict how their constituents express themselves, everywhere from council meetings to their own private property. We created the Municipal Muzzle Award to identify the worst offenders, crowning Calgary's content-based bubble zone law, the "Safe and Inclusive Access Bylaw," the nation's most egregious.

But we didn't stop at exposing the problem – we took action. In Niagara Falls, the CCF launched the first case under our new Censorship Defence Fund, filing a constitutional challenge on behalf of women who were arrested for peacefully holding paper protest signs during a city council meeting. The city claimed enforcement of its "Decorum Policy" – which bans all signs and symbolic materials in council chambers – a clear and unjustified violation of their *Charter*-protected right to free expression.

In Whitehorse, we pushed the city to amend its speech-restricting "Civility Policy" to better protect the freedom of expression of citizens who wish to participate in local government. As a result, there's no more banning so-called "microaggressions," no more policing what people can wear, and no more silencing provocative signs at council meetings.

We also challenged constitutional violations at the provincial level when Nova Scotia proclaimed a ban on entering the woods in the middle of the summer to prevent wildfires. Premier Houston's ban prohibited basic outdoor activities – walking, birdwatching, fishing, and picnicking – even on private property. Violators faced fines of \$25,000. Our petition to end the ban and our posts raising awareness generated some of our highest social media engagement ever. We successfully obtained standing to argue at judicial review that the government lacks the authority to impose such a sweeping restriction and that the ban fails to proportionately balance *Charter* rights.

The legacies of civil liberty abuses from the pandemic remain on our radar. The 2023 historic victory against the *Emergencies Act*, where the Federal Court ruled that the Trudeau government's response to the Freedom Convoy was illegal and unconstitutional, remains under appeal. The federal government has hired private lawyers to overturn what they clearly see as an embarrassing defeat. We defended our position in the Federal Court of Appeal in February, arguing that the court was absolutely correct to find there was no national emergency justifying the freezing of bank accounts and arrests of peaceful protesters. This case represents a defining moment for Canadian civil liberties, establishing crucial precedents about the limits of government power during times of crisis.

Moreover, we are awaiting a decision from the Supreme Court on *Taylor v Canada*, a case testing the constitutional right to interprovincial travel after COVID-19 restrictions blocked a woman from attending her mother's funeral in 2020. Upholding Canadians' mobility rights under the *Charter* is essential to preserving future fundamental freedoms when fear threatens liberty.

While we fight for constitutional values in courts across the country, we're also equipping Canadians with the knowledge to defend their rights through free education. This year, we launched a new, free online course on privacy rights, giving citizens the tools to protect themselves from government and data surveillance. We published a comprehensive Guide to Protest in Canada, to help Canadians better understand their rights when speaking out. We created a free online course pack for high school civics teachers to educate students on their Constitution and get them engaged in the issues affecting our democracy. These resources reflect our commitment to ensuring that constitutional rights are not only upheld by law, but understood by the public.

As we look ahead, the challenges to constitutional rights are evolving, from municipal councils to digital surveillance to emergency powers that never seem to end. But so too is our resolve. With your continued support, we're building the legal precedents, educational resources, and public awareness needed to meet these challenges head-on. Every case we win, every bylaw we challenge, and every Canadian we educate strengthens the foundation of constitutional rights for future generations. Together, we're not just defending liberty, but expanding it.



JOANNA BARON  
Executive Director

# KEY CASE METRICS



**11**

new cases filed



**3**

case victories



**7**

hearings argued

## MILESTONES OF 2024-2025

This was a banner year for the CCF as we elevated the standing of our work and entered new spheres of influence to expand our reach.

### VICTORY IN WHITEHORSE

*Whitehorse amended its restrictive “Civility Policy” after our lawsuit, resulting in stronger protections for citizens’ freedom of expression at city council meetings.*

### DEFENDED OUR CASE AT EMERGENCIES ACT APPEAL

*The Federal Court of Appeal heard arguments at the Liberal government’s appeal of our successful challenge to the 2022 use of the Emergencies Act against the Freedom Convoy.*

### 100K YOUTUBE SUBSCRIBERS

*The official @theCCF YouTube channel surpassed 100,000 subscribers, with Christine receiving the Silver Play Button for her vital work informing Canadians on current issues affecting civil liberties.*

### LAUNCH OF HIGH SCHOOL CIVICS COURSE PACK

*Josh lead the release of a free online course pack with slides, readings, and videos to help teachers educate students on the Constitution and democratic principles.*

### MAPLE’S GARDEN HITS SHELVES

*Christine’s first ever children’s book, Maple’s Garden, went to print across Canada, giving kids an accessible introduction to the Charter of Rights and Freedoms.*

# New Litigation

This year, the CCF has taken on **ten new cases** with a deliberate focus on freedom of expression, especially at the local level.

## [Niagara Falls sign ban](#)

In response to the June arrest of Lauren O'Connor for silently displaying a small sign at a Niagara Falls City Council meeting, the CCF has filed a constitutional challenge. Ms. O'Connor and other women were denied the opportunity to speak, so they non-disruptively held signs reading "The Women of Ontario Say No" in their laps. Mayor James Diodati refused to proceed until the signs were out of sight, and police arrested three women for trespassing when they refused.

Banning all signs and symbols is an unjustified and extreme limit on free expression, and courts have previously ruled that governments must use the least restrictive means possible when limiting constitutional rights. In this case, the city's response was not only excessive but failed to meet the legal test of proportionality under the *Charter*.

## [Academic freedom at UBC](#)

The CCF is assisting four professors and a former graduate student in a Supreme Court of British Columbia petition to enforce UBC's statutory requirement to remain non-political. The petitioners argue UBC's administration violated section 66(1) of BC's *University Act*, which mandates universities be "non-sectarian and non-political in principle," by requiring faculty applicants to commit to diversity, equity and inclusion doctrines, by making political statements about the Israel-Palestinian conflict, and by making unceded land acknowledgements. Academic freedom requires institutional neutrality – when administrations take political positions, professors and students lose the freedom to inquire openly on those topics.



PREPARED BY  
Jessica Goddard

# New Litigation



## [Prohibited naturalized garden](#)

*Ruck v City of Mississauga*

The CCF intervened in support of Wolf Ruck, a Mississauga homeowner fighting the city's enforcement of a "Nuisance Weed and Tall Grass Control By-law" against his naturalized garden. Mr. Ruck's garden features native plants arranged to mimic naturally-occurring meadows and forests, expressing his environmental beliefs and preference for Canadian native plants and pollinators. Officials from the city crossed onto Mr. Ruck's property without consent in 2022 and 2023 to mow down his garden.

After our intervention, the Ontario Court of Appeal set aside a lower court decision that upheld the city's enforcement, giving Mr. Ruck another opportunity to argue the bylaw is unconstitutional. This bylaw's primary effect is to impose the city's subjective aesthetic standards on private property owners, violating Mr. Ruck's *Charter* right to express his beliefs on his own land.

## [Mayor of Emo free expression](#)

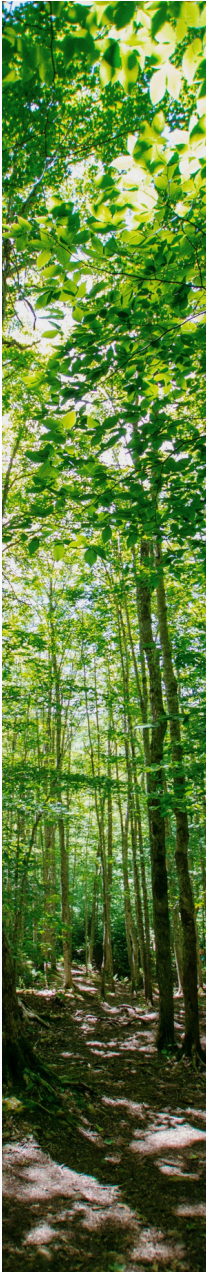
*Borderland Pride v Emo Township*

Mayor Harold McQuaker's \$5,000 fine for voting against a Pride Month proclamation is now under judicial review, with the CCF participating as an intervener. In 2024, the Ontario Human Rights Tribunal ruled that a comment the mayor made during council debate proved his vote was discriminatory, resulting in his personal bank account being garnished and the 1,200-person town being fined \$10,000.

The CCF will argue that the tribunal failed to consider Mayor McQuaker's *Charter*-protected freedom of expression and ignored the Supreme Court's legal framework for balancing expression and equality rights established in *Ward v Quebec*. Municipal politicians must be free to engage in good faith political debate without facing punitive sanctions for expressing their views.

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# New Litigation



## [Nova Scotia woods ban](#)

*CCF v Nova Scotia*

Premier Tim Houston's August proclamation made it illegal to walk, camp, birdwatch, fish, and picnic in wooded areas without a permit, under threat of \$25,000 in fines, to supposedly curb wildfires. The CCF has been granted public interest standing to challenge the province-wide travel ban which exceeds government powers under the *Nova Scotia Forests Act*, is unconstitutionally vague and overbroad, and fails to proportionately balance *Charter* rights. The *Forests Act* does not authorize shutting down access to all wooded areas across the province, and the government must proportionately balance people's rights with their objectives.

## [Damages awards after notwithstanding is invoked](#)

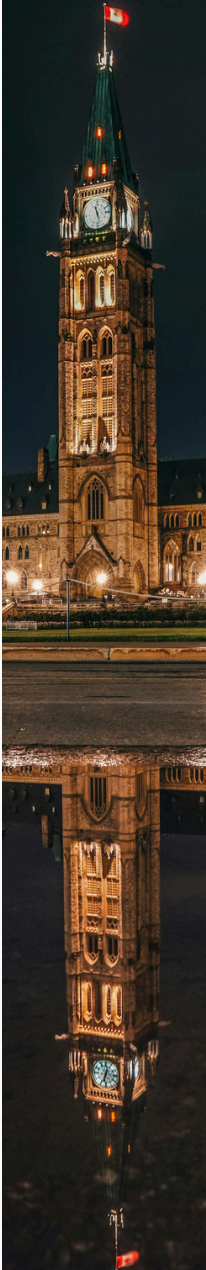
*Hak v Quebec*

The CCF has been granted intervener status in a Supreme Court challenge to Quebec's Bill 21, which bans certain public sector employees from wearing religious symbols at work. The case will determine whether courts can make "moot declarations" finding rights violations after a government invokes the notwithstanding clause, and whether courts can award damages in such circumstances.

Imposing a financial penalty would undermine the purpose of Section 33 and upset the constitutional balance between courts and legislatures. The notwithstanding clause was designed to give elected governments the final say on rights for five-year periods, and permitting judicial remedies would have a chilling effect on legislative authority contrary to Canada's constitutional framework.

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# New Litigation



## [Erosion of Parliamentary privilege](#)

*Alford v Canada (Attorney General)*

The CCF has been granted intervener status in a Supreme Court of Canada challenge to Section 12 of the *National Security and Intelligence Committee of Parliamentarians Act* (NSICOP). Lakehead University Professor Ryan Alford will argue that the provision unconstitutionally allows the executive branch to suppress Parliamentary debate by threatening criminal sanctions against MPs who disclose classified information, even during Parliamentary proceedings. This provision removes Parliamentary immunity and lets the executive unilaterally define national security matters, then criminalize debate on those topics. Free speech in Parliament is essential to democracy, and the executive cannot be allowed to decide what MPs can debate through threats of criminal prosecution.

## [Scope of equality in the Charter](#)

*Québec c. Kanyinda*

A Section 15 *Charter* case about equality rights and access to government benefit programs was heard by the Supreme Court in May, with the CCF appearing as an intervener.

In 2018, Congolese refugee claimant Bijou Cibuabua Kanyinda was denied access to Quebec's subsidized daycare while awaiting a decision on her refugee status. She argued this was discrimination. The Quebec Court of Appeal ruled in Kanyinda's favour – that the policy discriminatory – finding it particularly hindered women's workforce participation. At the Supreme Court, the CCF put forward that governments must be able to set reasonable limits on access to benefit programs without it being presumed that these limits constitute discrimination.

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# New Litigation

## [Alberta challenge to \*Impact Assessment Act\*](#)

*RE: Impact Assessment Act (Court of Appeal of Alberta reference)*

The CCF is intervening in Alberta's new challenge to the *Impact Assessment Act* (Bill C-69) at the Alberta Court of Appeal. This follows last year's victory at the Supreme Court of Canada, where most of the IAA was found unconstitutional for allowing federal regulation of projects outside its jurisdiction.

In October 2023, the Supreme Court decided in a 5-2 ruling that the IAA violated the constitution by requiring proponents of provincially-regulated projects to undergo lengthy federal environmental assessments, effectively giving the federal government veto power over whether projects could proceed. Chief Justice Richard Wagner found that Parliament clearly exceeded its authority by regulating provincial activities simply because they might affect federal matters, granting Parliament nearly unlimited power to control projects it had no right to regulate. In late 2024, the federal government made minor amendments to the Act, which the Alberta government maintains are insufficient.

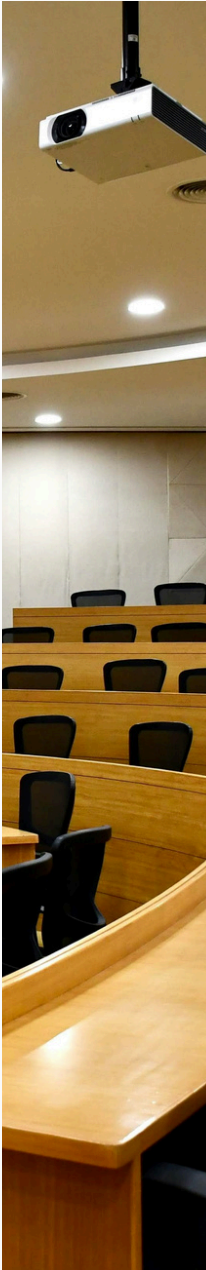
In the new legal challenge, the CCF will once again argue that the IAA seriously threatens Canada's constitutional division of powers and undermines federalism by allowing the federal government to make decisions about provincial developments like highways and mines.

## [Kingston police drone surveillance](#)

With assistance from the CCF, an Ontario woman is fighting a distracted driving ticket issued after she photographed a police drone hovering outside her car window while stopped at a red light in Kingston. Police later revealed the drone was theirs, and was used to zoom in on drivers inside their vehicles, capturing close-up footage of hands, arms, and phone screens as part of a distracted driving blitz. Canadians have a reasonable expectation of privacy in their vehicles, and police drones secretly recording drivers inside their cars constitutes an unreasonable search and violates section 8 of the *Charter*. Citizens must be able to go about their daily lives without being watched from above by their government.

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# Recent Litigation



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The Canadian Constitution Foundation continues to pursue strategic litigation to hold governments accountable at all levels: municipal, provincial, and federal.

## [Whitehorse “Civility Policy”](#)

*CCF v City of Whitehorse*

The CCF was pleased to terminate its lawsuit against the City of Whitehorse after council voted unanimously to amend its “Civility Policy” to better protect freedom of expression. The amended policy no longer bans “microaggressions,” most signage, or “disrespectful” attire, and residents won’t face censure for “inappropriate” comments. While imperfect, these changes better balance decorum with citizens’ *Charter* rights to express their viewpoints in council chambers. Importantly, Whitehorse council’s change of heart on the policy demonstrates what is possible when residents speak up to challenge unconstitutional restrictions on expression.

## [BC vaccine passports](#)

*Kassian et al v British Columbia*

In a *Charter* challenge to BC’s COVID-19 vaccine passport system and its discriminatory impact on people who cannot be vaccinated for medical reasons, the CCF assisted three women who were not provided a workable medical exemption process to navigate. Specifically, Sharon developed brachial neuritis after her first vaccine dose, Erica developed pericarditis, and Veronica had a history of adverse reactions to medications.

The BC Court of Appeal dismissed the appeal, finding the claims premature. The Court acknowledged the guidance was constantly shifting and difficult to understand, but granted undue deference to the Provincial Health Officer’s interpretation. While the Court found it unreasonable to deny blanket exemptions during a specific period, it declined to conduct a *Charter* analysis.

# Ongoing Litigation

## [Challenge to Emergencies Act use](#)

*CCF v Attorney General of Canada*

In January 2024, the Trudeau government's 2022 invocation of the *Emergencies Act* in response to the Freedom Convoy was deemed illegal, with Justice Richard Mosley finding there was no national emergency or threat to the security of Canada as required by the *Act*, and that freezing bank accounts and restricting protests violated *Charter* rights. The federal government appealed immediately.

The CCF argued that the definition of "threats to the security of Canada" were not met, and that Cabinet does not have unfettered discretion to invoke the *Act*. The Federal Court of Appeal heard arguments in February 2025, and we now await their decision.

## [Interprovincial travel rights](#)

*Taylor v Canada*

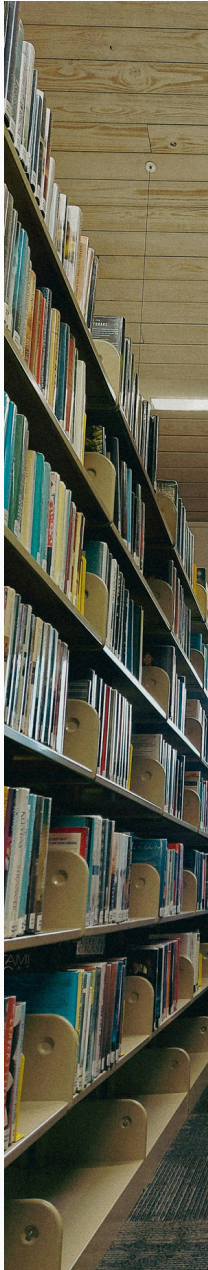
Kim Taylor was denied permission to travel from Nova Scotia to Newfoundland in May 2020 to attend her mother's funeral due to pandemic travel restrictions. To determine whether Canadian citizens have a constitutionally-protected right to interprovincial travel, the CCF has been granted intervener status in the Supreme Court case on the constitutionality of Newfoundland and Labrador's pandemic travel restrictions.

Mobility rights are essential to a democratic and free society – the framers of the Constitution intended to create a confederation that allowed citizens and permanent residents to travel, work, and participate in the electoral process throughout Canada, which requires a constitutional right to travel *simpliciter*.



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# Ongoing Litigation



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## [Calgary protest restriction bylaw case](#)

*CCF v. City of Calgary*

The CCF brought a judicial review to the Alberta Court of King's Bench challenging Calgary's "safe and inclusive bylaw," which restricts protests expressing "objection or disapproval" related to race, religious beliefs, gender identity, sexual orientation, and other protected characteristics. The bylaw prohibits such protests within 100 metres of recreation facilities or libraries, with penalties up to \$10,000 and possible imprisonment. The bylaw is a clear violation of freedom of expression and assembly. The right to free expression is content neutral – the government is not to decide which topics are worthy of protest.

## [Quebec school prayer ban](#)

*Association Canadienne Des Libertes Civiles c. Procureur General Du Quebec*

Quebec's directive banning conspicuous prayer on school properties is being challenged on constitutional grounds, and the CCF has been granted intervener status. An April 2023 Order in Council prohibits prayer for students whose faith requires them to pray visibly during school hours, including Muslim students. The CCF will argue the policy violates freedom of religion under section 2(a) of the *Charter* and that its harmful effects on children's religious rights outweigh any benefits to state secularism, the minister's stated goal.

## [Freedom of information about UAPs and UFOs](#)

A freelance investigative journalist is appealing Ontario Power Generation's (OPG) denial of records about Unidentified Aerial Phenomena (UAP) and UFOs detected near nuclear power plants, with assistance from the CCF. OPG identified responsive records but refused to provide copies, citing a safety exemption. Journalists and the public must be able to access information under freedom of information laws. Ontario's law guarantees public access to information from public institutions, and exemptions must be limited and specific.

# Ongoing Litigation



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## [Scope of police search powers](#)

*R v Singer*

The CCF intervened at the Supreme Court of Canada in a case regarding the scope of police powers to enter private property without a warrant under the "implied license" doctrine. Police crossed onto Mr. Singer's property without a warrant, looked into his vehicle window, opened the vehicle door, and collected evidence used to prosecute him. The implied license doctrine does not extend this far and must be clearly and narrowly defined to prevent police from abusing it. Police must be required to collect evidence within the parameters of the Constitution.

## [First-past-the-post constitutionality](#)

*Canada v Fair Voting BC & Springtide Collective for Democracy Society*

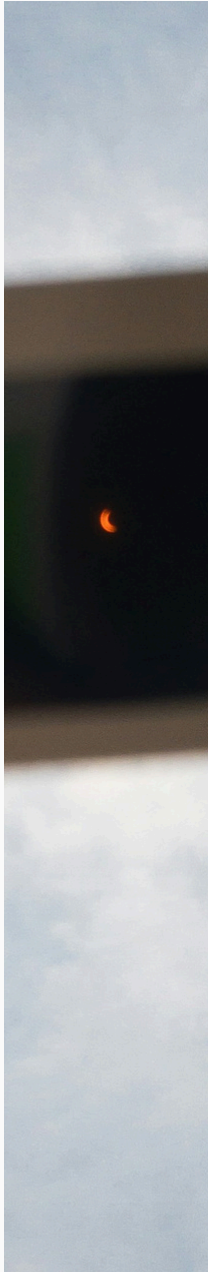
The Ontario Court of Appeal dismissed a legal challenge to Canada's first-past-the-post (FPTP) voting system, with the CCF intervening to argue the system is constitutional. Justice Huscroft endorsed the CCF's arguments about constitutional text, with the court correctly finding that poor performance by small political parties is not a *Charter* infringement. Nothing in the *Charter* or *Constitution Act, 1867* suggests FPTP is unconstitutional – the system has existed since Confederation, and the Constitution explicitly refers to constituency-based representation.

## [Region of Waterloo harassment bylaw](#)

*CCF v Region of Waterloo*

In September 2023, the Region of Waterloo amended its Code of Use By-law to define harassment as "experiencing objectionable or unwelcome conduct, comment, bullying, or actions that could reasonably cause offence or humiliation" based on various protected grounds, with fines up to \$5,000, in addition to banning communications that "reasonably constitute harassment" on regional property such as parks, trails and regional headquarters. This chills protesters' and others' freedom of expression, and goes beyond the Region's powers. The CCF filed for judicial review with the Ontario Superior Court, seeking to have the amendment struck down.

# Ongoing Litigation



## [Niagara solar eclipse “emergency”](#)

*Renaud & CCF v Niagara*

The CCF filed for judicial review in Ontario's Divisional Court seeking to quash Niagara Region's unlawful State of Emergency declaration issued ahead of the 2024 solar eclipse. Regional Chair Jim Bradley declared the emergency "out of an abundance of caution" due to expected traffic congestion from eclipse visitors to Niagara Falls.

These circumstances did not meet the statutory definition of "emergency" under the *Emergency Management and Civil Protection Act*, and was an example of government using extraordinary legal powers for convenience rather than necessity. The definition of "emergency" must remain narrow to ensure the state is not encouraged to limit property rights and infringe on civil liberties.

## [Free expression on private property](#)

*Robertson v Murray Harbour*

Councillor John Robertson of Murray Harbour, PEI was fined \$500, removed as committee chair, and suspended from council for six months after displaying on a roadside signboard: "Truth: Mass Grave Hoax. Reconciliation: Redeem Sir John A's Integrity." At the application for judicial review heard in the Supreme Court of PEI, the CCF argued that council failed to consider Robertson's *Charter* right to freedom of expression and improperly sanctioned political speech with no connection to his role in council.

Justice Jonathan M. Coady of the PEI Supreme Court found Robertson's challenge had "a reasonable prospect of being successful on the merits," but dismissed the case for missing the 30-day filing deadline. The CCF is considering further legal action.

PREPARED BY  
Jessica Goddard



# RUNNYMEDE SOCIETY



The Runnymede Society is a membership-based organization of law and pre-law students, lawyers, and legal scholars committed to upholding three principles: the rule of law, constitutionalism, and fundamental freedoms in Canada. We invite speakers from across the ideological spectrum to debate real issues that engage these age-old principles, beyond what is discussed in the classroom and the legal profession.

## Notable chapter events

In Canadian law schools, 2024-25 was another record-breaking year. Runnymede pre-law and law school student chapters held 48 events, with total attendance of almost 2,400. An estimated 10% of all law students in Canada attended at least one Runnymede event last year. In addition, Runnymede lawyer chapters held eight events across Canada, with 280 total attendees. Notable events include the following:

- **Edmonton (Lawyers Chapter): “The Law and Politics of Crown Prerogative Powers”**, engaging with questions arising from the 2025 prorogation sought by Prime Minister Justin Trudeau, featuring Professor Gerard Kennedy of the University of Alberta, with remarks from special guest M.P. Garnett Genuis.
- **University of Toronto Faculty of Law: “Contemporary Legal Realism”**, discussing post-modernism and critical theory in Canadian law schools and their tendency to draw courts into the political arena, featuring Justice Malcolm Rowe of the Supreme Court of Canada.

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*cont'd*



# RUNNYMEDE SOCIETY



- **Université de Moncton Faculté de droit: “Politique 713: Et alors, maintenant?”**, a panel discussion to debate New Brunswick’s Policy 713, which required parental consent for school teachers to use gender nonconforming names and pronouns of students under 16, featuring Laurence Gauvin-Joyal, Lisa Lacenaire-McHardie, and Professor Stéphane Sérafin.
- **Lakehead University Bora Laskin Faculty of Law: “10 Hot Wings - 10 Hot Topics: MAID, Expansion of Charter Rights, Capital Punishment, and more”**, featuring Professor Ryan Alford and Professor Mariette Brennan, moderated by Runnymede student chapter leader Mason Stewart.
- **Université de Laval Faculté de droit: “La théorie de l’arbre vivant”** (in French), discussing the Supreme Court’s use of the living tree doctrine in constitutional interpretation, featuring Justice Suzanne Côté of the Supreme Court of Canada.

## Law & Freedom

In February 2025, the Law & Freedom Conference sold out yet again to more than 200 attendees. Excerpts of conference presentations are available on our podcast, Runnymede Radio, and full versions are available online only to Runnymede members.

Justice David Stratas of the Federal Court of Appeal delivered a keynote address for the ages, entitled, “Doctrine Ain’t Dead, Yet.” His Honour followed up on a speech in 2016 lamenting the demise of legal doctrine, this year sounding a more optimistic note. Justice Stratas traced several areas of public law in which there has been a revival of predictable legal doctrine, capable of consistent application by judges. His Honour credited the Runnymede Society for playing a part in this shift and celebrated our commitment to intellectual diversity.

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Tim Haggstrom



# RUNNYMEDE SOCIETY



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Tim Haggstrom



Other Law & Freedom presentations included the following:

- **Fireside Chat on Freedom of Expression**, featuring Nadine Strossen, former national President of the American Civil Liberties Union, moderated by Joanna Baron of the Canadian Constitution Foundation.
- **The Supreme Court of Canada as an Institution**, featuring Professor Andrea Lawlor, Professor Paul-Erik Veel, and Professor Ted Morton, moderated by Professor Ian Brodie of the University of Calgary.
- **Constitutional Challenges to Prorogation**, featuring Andre Memauri, Professor Dave Snow, James Manson, and Professor Paul Daly, moderated by Professor Ryan Alford of Lakehead University.
- **The Common Law and the Judicial Role**, featuring Alexi Wood, Asher Honickman, Christoph Pike, and Professor Stéphane Sérafin, moderated by Professor Malcolm Lavoie of the University of Alberta.
- **Regulation of Professions and Free Expression**, featuring Caylan Ford, Christine Van Geyn, Malcolm Mercer, and Lorne Honickman, moderated by Professor Steven Penney of the University of Alberta.
- **Universities' Institutional Obligations, Academic Freedom, and Free Expression** (in French), featuring Dean Érik Labelle Eastaugh, Professor François Charbonneau, and Professor Stéphane Sérafin, moderated by Chantal Bellavance of Boro Frigon Gordon Jones.
- **Power Over Parliament?** featuring Professor Dennis Baker, George Avraam, Professor Gerard Kennedy, and Jennifer Bernardo, moderated by Kris Kinsinger of SV Law.



# RUNNYMEDE SOCIETY

## Chapter leaders

The Law & Freedom conference allows Runnymede volunteer chapter leaders from across the country to visit in person. These student and lawyer volunteers, who are essential to Runnymede's continuing success, regularly report that it is a highlight of their year.

In addition, last fall, Runnymede hosted our second annual lawyer chapter retreat in Calgary, giving lawyer chapter leaders a chance to network with each other and create a plan for the year ahead. In July, Runnymede hosted the annual student leadership summit in Ottawa. There, a record number of student chapter leaders were joined by several professors and members of the judiciary and heard from guest speakers on current orthodoxies in Canadian law schools and on academic freedom.

## Dicey Law Review

Runnymede's legal journal, the *Dicey Law Review*, has been expanding. Volume 5 is expected to be published in 2025 with a record 11 articles. To continue this momentum while also creating valuable opportunities for student members in the Runnymede Society, in 2025-26 we are recruiting a team of student editors to join the *Dicey* editorial board.



## Graduate Fellowships and the Blackstone Prize

The Runnymede Society is proud to facilitate a scholarship program for graduate students in law. In 2024-25, Preston Lim was named the Jack Major Fellow while pursuing his S.J.D. at the University of Toronto. Going into 2025-26, Runnymede is delighted to be expanding this program, offering two \$25,000 awards: the Jack Major Fellowship and the Marshall Rothstein Fellowship.

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Tim Haggstrom

In 2024, Runnymede received 10 submissions to the Blackstone Prize student essay competition. The winner and runner up received glowing reviews from our law faculty jurors. In addition to receiving cash prizes, their contributions are being published in the *Dicey Law Review*.



# RUNNYMEDE SOCIETY

## A Message from Tim Haggstrom

“Runnymede continues to be recognized in Canada as a leader in sincere, open, and rigorous discussion of legal matters of the day. We are leading especially through our willingness to question legal orthodoxies. In this way, Runnymede is fostering among members of the Canadian legal community a more courageous and stalwart commitment to the principles of constitutionalism, the rule of law, and fundamental freedoms. Last year marked a meaningful expansion, and we anticipate even more growth in the years ahead.”



- Tim Haggstrom, National Director

## Organizational changes

The Runnymede Society was delighted to welcome Robbie Borrelli to the team in July 2025, in the role of Content and Communications Director. Robbie recently completed graduate studies in political science, demonstrating his rigorous thinking and keen interest in constitutional law. He supports Runnymede chapters to put on excellent programming and tells our story to a growing group of social media followers and email subscribers.

Since coming to Runnymede in a joint operations and communications role, Naomi Papavero has moved into the post of Operations Director, focusing her organizational prowess on logistics for major events.

To support Naomi, Runnymede’s growing team now also includes Vesh Aggarwal as Operations Manager. Supporting the student chapters nationwide, Vesh is applying his leadership skills and passion for fostering excellence in teamwork.



PREPARED BY  
Tim Haggstrom

# PRIMARYDOCUMENTS.CA

*A searchable database of historical documents relating to the drafting and adoption of the Constitution of Canada.*

## **A New Home for Primary Documents**

In 2024–2025, PrimaryDocuments officially became a project of the Runnymede Society. We are very excited to be part of this great national community. Like Runnymede, we seek to further knowledge of the law and Canada’s constitutional history through our website and publications. We believe that unless present-day Canadian lawyers, jurists and historians can determine with reasonable certainty what each of the provisions of the Constitution meant to those who were present at the time of enactment, they cannot be certain what these laws mean today. This in turn means that these present-day actors need access to the complete record left behind by the people who wrote, debated, revised, and enacted these laws.

## **Discoveries: New British North America Act Drafts**

In 2024–2025, the PrimaryDocuments project made significant discoveries in the constitutional history of Canada. Following our discoveries of drafts of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms last year, we have discovered new drafts and documents from the Confederation era, including drafts of the *British North America Act, 1867* and London Resolutions. Many of these have been added to our website and will be part of an upcoming “Book in Progress” in 2025.



# PRIMARYDOCUMENTS.CA

## Books in Progress

In 2024–2025, we launched our first “Book in Progress” on the Notwithstanding Clause, including newly discovered Charter drafts that illuminate the history of Section 33. A book in progress is a publication we at PrimaryDocuments.ca are working on, but is not yet complete. However, due to the importance of the material and its relevance to the current discussions on Quebec’s Bill 21 before the SCC, we felt that it was better to have the documents available to the public. And so, we will continue to update this publication until it’s ready to be formally published as an eBook or print edition.

A Book in Progress on the *British North America Act*, including never-before-published drafts will be released in 2025. Please consult our website for updates on that publication.

## Publications

In 2024–2025, we published a second edition of The Quebec Resolutions, edited by Charles Dumais. The Quebec Resolutions of 1864 form the embryonic text of Canada’s constitution, the *British North America Act, 1867*. This volume presents an exhaustive collection of the relevant primary documents, including some drafts and preparatory materials previously unknown to the academic literature. The *Quebec Resolutions* also features substantial additional primary documents for historical context. In addition, the volume contains links to permit readers to directly view each archived document. The first edition of *The Quebec Resolutions* was published on the PrimaryDocuments.ca website in eBook format in 2021. The second edition is now available both as an eBook and will soon be available in print as well.



## Statistics

PrimaryDocuments continues to be used as a valuable tool by universities, courts, scholarship in Canada and abroad, and in media publications. Our website is cited as a resource in library guides and courses across Canadian universities. In terms of raw numbers, PrimaryDocuments has substantially increased the holdings in its collection to nearly 5,400 documents, up from 4,800 last year. The amount of unique visitors has increased by over 45% from the past year.



# Our Podcast



The Canadian Constitution Foundation's podcast **Not Reserving Judgment** released its 100<sup>th</sup> episode in September.



As of September 2025, more than 2,000 listeners have subscribed to the Canadian Constitution Foundation's weekly podcast on YouTube, with hundreds more listening each week on podcasting apps.

In each episode, CCF Counsel Josh Dehaas, CCF Executive Director Joanna Baron, and CCF Litigation Director Christine Van Geyn discuss the latest legal news in Canada and offer their lighthearted Bad Legal Takes of the Week.

We're now the top Canadian-made legal podcast, and we're quickly moving up the ranks in Canadian news commentary. In May, the podcast was named one of FeedSpot's Best Law podcasts for 2025.

You can find Not Reserving Judgment on Apple, Spotify, YouTube, and wherever else you get your podcasts. You can also stream it directly from our website.



# Communications

August 2024 to September 2025



Our challenge to Nova Scotia’s forest ban drew international attention, including coverage from the BBC, and generated some of our highest engagement ever on social media. Our petition to keep Nova Scotia’s trails open was widely circulated online and ultimately received more than 6,000 signatures.

## Highlights

- Christine’s work on developing a strong YouTube presence for the CCF has unquestionably paid off – in April 2025, the official channel, @theCCF, celebrated the major milestone of 100,000 subscribers... and counting! Returning viewers are up 16.6% compared to the same period last year.
- The Freedom Update, our weekly email newsletter, remains our most valued platform for engaging committed supporters, keeping them informed on our cases and promoting meaningful discourse with subscribers. Our email open rate remains well above average, at close to 40%.
- Op-eds from Joanna, Christine, and Josh appear regularly in National Post, The Globe and Mail, Toronto Star, The Hub, The Line, Juno News, and more.
- In the last year, the CCF’s legal team has been busy writing more reports and publications **than any year previous**:
  - Free Speech in Canada: A beginner's guide from ancient roots to current controversies (December 2024)
  - Civil Liberties Naughty or Nice List (December 2024)
  - Canada’s Most Censorious Bylaws (June 2025)
  - Know Your Rights: A Guide to Protest in Canada (June 2025)
  - Safety Above All: How the culture of “safetyism” is eroding civil liberties in Canada (August 2025)

+26%

82,237 to 103,864  
Increase in YouTube subscribers

2,000+

Instagram followers since the account’s debut last year

42.8K

Facebook interactions (reactions, shares, replies, etc.) between Aug. 2024 to Sept. 2025

# Education

August 2024 to September 2025



## Highlights

- Our focus on providing free educational resources to the public ramped up this year. Our learning website ([theccf.ca/learn](https://theccf.ca/learn)) expanded to become a platform for more than just online courses, including our Guide to Safe and Legal Protest in Canada and course pack for high school civics and social studies teachers – a complete civics lesson plan with slides, readings, and original videos.
- In May, we launched our latest free online course, Privacy and Surveillance: Know Your Rights, featuring engaging video lectures from top legal minds and privacy experts on pressing subjects like data privacy, emerging parameters around artificial intelligence, and the right to be free from unwarranted bodily and territorial searches.
- As part of our mission to promote a culture of freedom, Christine’s children’s book *Maple’s Garden* was published in September 2025 to introduce the *Charter* to school-aged Canadians. Inspired by a real constitutional case, the story follows Maple, a nature-loving girl who learns about the importance of freedom of speech when her wild, pollinator-friendly garden is threatened by a nosey neighbour and meddling mayor.

300+

Users enrolled in this year’s new, free online course on privacy rights

715

Unique visitors to our free Guide to Safe and Legal Protest in Canada

1,146

Total downloads of CCF published reports this year



# Audited Financials

April 1, 2024 to March 31, 2025

## REVENUE: **100% PRIVATELY FUNDED**

Contributions & Grants	\$2,309,706
Restricted Contributions	\$703,291
Other Revenue	\$304,980
Total Revenue	\$3,317,977

## EXPENSES:

Project (and/or) Charitable Activities	\$2,020,061
Office & Administration	\$215,473
Fundraising	\$457,880
Total Expenses:	\$2,693,414



# CANADIAN CONSTITUTION FOUNDATION

The **Canadian Constitution Foundation** is a national and non-partisan charity. Our mission is to defend the constitutionally protected rights and freedoms of Canadians, and uphold the constitution and its liberty-promoting features, including Canadian federalism.

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Contact by phone or email

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By mail

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The CCF is also a 501(c)(3) public charity in the U.S.