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## Teaching children the history of society's treatment on the disabled

By Andrew Tutty

Halton Hills Accessibility Advisory Committee



Andrew Tutty

Recently, one of my Facebook friends had a very upsetting incident in a B.C. restaurant.

She was refused service because she had her guide dog with her. The staff refused to recognize the official documents identifying her dog as a guide dog.

It is difficult to believe that in 2016 there are still people who do not know what a guide dog is and the rights of the blind under Canadian law.

Unfortunately, this and other incidents are an all too frequent occurrence, even in Ontario, where disability rights are legislated through the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA). These types of incidents serve to highlight the necessity of all jurisdictions to enshrine into law the rights of the disabled to equal access in the public and private sectors. Any legislation must be enforceable and shouldn't place the monetary burden of seeking redress through the courts onto the disabled person.

The disabled are chronically under employed and are least likely able to afford litigation. The government should be the plaintiff on their be-

half. Legislation needs periodic review procedures to ensure continued relevancy.

The history of societal treatment of persons with disabilities should be taught in the school systems. The curriculum should include the history of the systemic exclusion of persons with physical disabilities, the maltreatment of those with intellectual disabilities, mistakenly informed by the Darwinian Eugenics movement in the late 19th through the mid-20th centuries.

Education should focus on the disability rights movement and recent efforts to formulate legislation from around the world.

You can become involved with the Federal Government's recently announced consultations for the form and substance a Canadians with Disabilities Act will take. They are seeking input. You can do it in person or take the online survey. It is available at: [www.esdc.gc.ca/en/](http://www.esdc.gc.ca/en/)

Andrew Tutty is a member of the Town's Accessibility Advisory Committee and writes about issues that affect people of all abilities.



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