

OUR VIEW

There are consequences to tougher drunk driving laws

According to "modern day research," current rules allowing drivers to get behind the wheel with under 80 milligrams of alcohol in their systems is underestimating the danger.

At least that's what federal Justice Minister Jody Wilson-Raybould has concluded in advance of suggesting the feds consider lowering the legal alcohol limit for licensed drivers. She sent a letter to Quebec Justice Minister Stephanie Vallee in May in which she suggests lowering the limit to 50 milligrams of alcohol per 100 millilitres of blood from the current 80 milligrams.

Would lowering the threshold for impaired driving really do much more to get the main perpetrators of this crime off our roads?

According to the letter, the current rules were based on research that indicated the risk of being involved in a car crash was twice as likely when a driver has 80 milligrams of alcohol per 100 millilitres of blood in his or her system.

It's too high, according to Wilson-Raybould. But we'd be curious to know the number of accidents that have happened after drivers have had one or two drinks but still tested within the legal range.

Mothers Against Drunk Driving Canada says any amount of alcohol in a driver's system is too much and crashes involving alcohol and/or drugs are the leading criminal cause of death in Canada. But would lowering the threshold for impaired driving really do much more to get the main perpetrators of this crime off our roads?

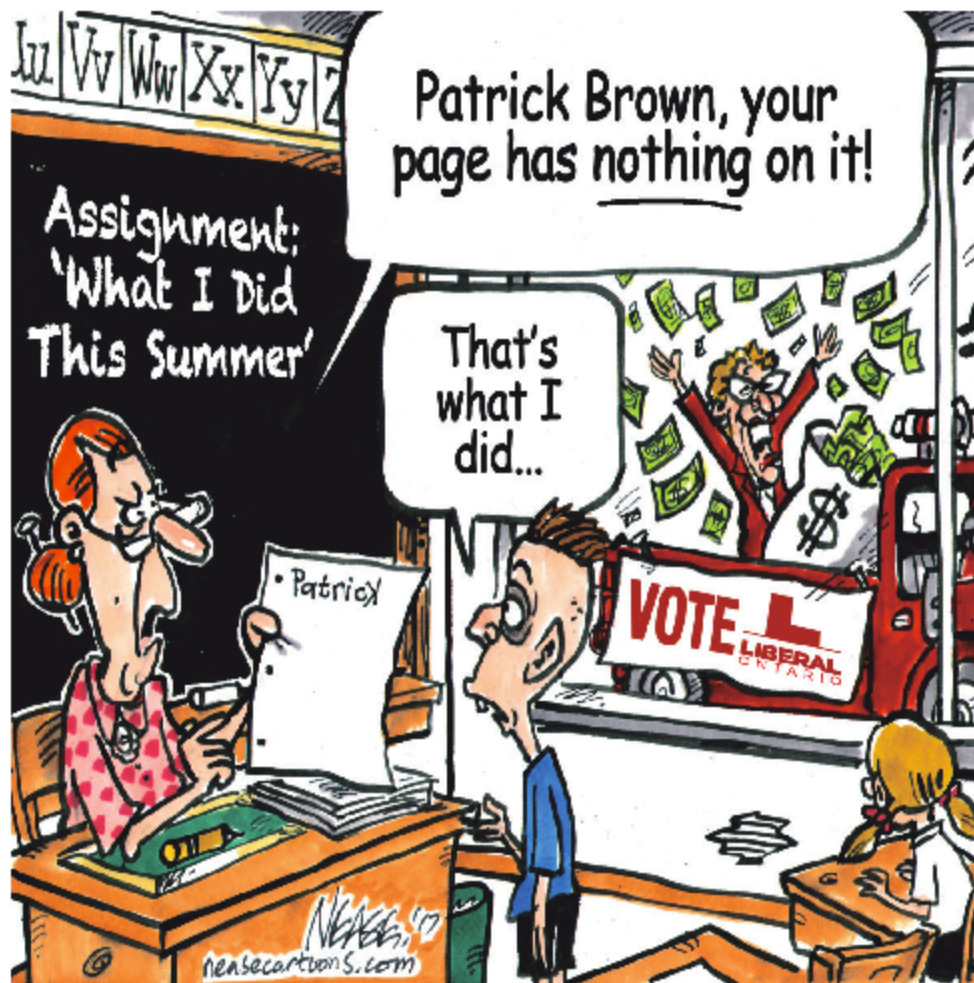
We know for a fact it would bog down our already overburdened justice system. And what would it mean for restaurants, particularly those outside of big cities?

If this rumoured change in legislation goes through, it could mean a virtual end to anyone enjoying a beer, a glass of wine, or cocktail while dining out.

Unless, of course, your night out includes an alternative means of transportation.

Restaurant associations are already crying foul over the possible change.

And we agree the economic impacts could be devastating to that industry, not to mention others.



Room for immigrants outside of major cities

To the editor:
The recent housing price affordability alert has been a long time coming and has been in the big picture for years.

Letters to the Editor



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LETTERS & COMMENTARY

Canada has the second largest land mass in the world, but we are all crammed together in Toronto, Vancouver and three or so other cities.

I know cities are becoming the newest 21st century economic engines, but in a modern world, does this make sense?

We are living in a digital technology world and we don't have to be bunched together for solely economic reasons.

It is the federal government that must get its act together with a big picture, at least, partial solution.

How about if Canada said we will continue to take immigrants as usual, but some will have to go to parts of the country in need of population growth.

Some will still come to the cities, but many will go

where the government foresees demographic imbalances.

It would be the choice of new Canadians, of course. We did that with Syrian refugees and we did that to populate the prairies in the early 1900s with land grants to settlers.

I understand that immigrants want to come to the big cities where the job action is, but if you are escaping violence and home loss, maybe that alternative would be welcome.

I am not blaming immigrants for the housing price crisis, however.

It is a worldwide phenomenon.

As a former Maritimer, I know that various governments have tried to give the region an economic boost, but progress was always slow.

To be a job engine, a city

needs a certain mass or scale (i.e. larger population for a self-sufficient economy).

I understand some Maritime provinces are losing population.

Times have changed with new technology. Where we live geographically is less crucial, many of us work from home or are entrepreneurs. We could start an online business anywhere.

Families need low-density affordable housing and we need more cities not less where families can grow.

There is plenty of low-density housing that could be available or be developed in many provinces of Canada and I know that the East Coast is a great place to raise kids without having to drive on the 401 daily.

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