

OPINION

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Denying marriage to gays hypocritical of Canadians

Re: MP disappoints on gay marriage letter, Feb. 17.

Ask just about anyone, they will all tell you they're in favour of equal rights for homosexuals. Just name the situation and ask.

They'll all say yes, gays should have the same rights in housing, jobs and public accommodations. They should have equal access to government benefits and equal protection under the law.

Then you get to gay marriage. And that's when all this talk of equality stops dead cold. Demanding Mr. Temelkovski vote against gay marriage is a prime example of this hypocrisy.

As a married, straight, father, I take offence to this Neanderthal attitude.

Those against the bill say marriage is an institution between one man and one woman. Who says what marriage is and by whom is it to be defined? The married?

Isn't that like allowing a banker to decide who is going to own the money in his vaults?

It seems to me justice demands if the straight community cannot show a compelling reason to deny marriage to gay people, it shouldn't be denied.

And simple, nebulous declarations, with no real moral argument behind them, are hardly compelling reasons.

They're really more like an expres-

sion of prejudice than any kind of a real argument. The concept of not denying people rights unless you can show a compelling reason to deny them is the basis of the Canadian ideal of human rights.

The values gay couples exhibit are often indistinguishable from those of their straight neighbours.

They're loyal, monogamous, devoted partners. They value and participate in family and community life.

Many make valuable contributions to their communities, serving on school boards, volunteering in community charities and trying to be good citizens.

In doing so, they take full advantage of their relationship to make not only their own lives better, but those of their neighbours, as well.

I did not vote for Mr. Temelkovski, but as one of his constituents, I also demand he represent the wishes of myself and my family and vote in favour of legalizing and recognizing same-sex marriages.

Seeing as marriage was around before it was ever sanctified by a church, perhaps we should do the smart, logical and common sense thing and drop religion from anything to do with marriage.

We should treat it as a bond between two human beings who love and honour each other. Sound fair?

MIKE PATTERSON
STOUFFVILLE



Screw up your courage Ottawa, legalize prostitution

Prostitution is an ugly thing, demeaning to both buyer and seller, and it would be a far better world if it didn't exist at all.

And it's about time we legalized it.

That proposal will be debated this week at the Liberals' national convention.

It's also the topic being studied by five MPs touring red-light districts of five cities this month.

Not for nothing is prostitution known as the world's oldest profession. In virtually every society throughout history, despite every attempt to eradicate the practice, it has continued.

The results of our efforts to stop it? Underage prostitutes, drug abuse, scandalized neighbourhoods, communicable diseases, organized crime, brutal assaults and murders. And a huge waste of police efforts and tax dollars.

The act of prostitution is, in fact, legal in Canada. But everything associated with it is illegal — soliciting, communicating or allowing it to take place in a building, quaintly known as keeping a bawdy house.



Bruce Annan

So the negotiation takes place quickly on a darkened street corner and the act takes place in the customer's vehicle — creating the opportunity for more than 50 murders of sex trade workers in Vancouver.

The "profession" is legalized and regulated in countries as diverse as Singapore and Denmark, Israel and Australia. The Canadian justice department reportedly has more than 20 studies on the subject, with a recommendation to decriminalize going back to 1985.

This country likes to think of itself as liberal. "The state has no place in the bedrooms of

the nation," said the father of our \$500-billion debt, Pierre Trudeau. Yet, we stigmatize, if not criminalize, both parties to a private act, freely agreed to by consenting adults.

Senator Mac Harb deserves credit for leading the move toward legalization, in the face of the "tsk, tsk" and "tee hee" reactions. The lives of young women are at stake.

His suggestion is municipalities be given the power to choose if and where to set up "legal" areas, much as they do now with strip joints and massage parlours, where illicit acts are likely taking place already.

It's proposed a trial zone be set up in Ottawa. Insert your own joke here.

Thanks to those who e-mailed me, agreeing with my recent column on the Kyoto Accord. And to those who wrote the editor to say, um, they disagreed somewhat.

I, indeed, have no PhD in climatology. Neither do I have a mortician's licence, but I've written obituaries — and Kyoto might as well be dead, when last week's federal budget allocates \$5 billion to "the environment" without once using the word Kyoto. Even the

government is finally embarrassed.

Tim Patterson of Carleton University, however, does have a doctorate; he's a paleoclimatology specialist. In the Feb. 10 National Post, he wrote: "If the climate science changes, as it has over the past eight years, government policy must adapt as well. Otherwise, the policy becomes disconnected entirely from science and we waste billions going in entirely the wrong direction."

To global warming's true believers, any temperature change proves they're right. The high-altitude air over the Arctic this winter is the coldest ever recorded. As to being called a "dupe" and a "hack": I guess that puts me in the company of Bjorn Lomborg. He was the target of ad hominem attacks from scientists who couldn't refute his research methodology. For those who prefer non-fiction reading, I recommend his book *The Skeptical Environmentalist*.

Now if you'll excuse me, I have to go shovel some global warming ...

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LETTERS POLICY

The Sun-Tribune welcomes your letters. Submissions must be less than 400 words and include a daytime telephone number, name and address. The Sun-Tribune reserves the right to publish or not publish and edit for clarity and space.

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