

CHALLENGING POLITICALLY CORRECT CENSORSHIP ON CAMPUS

HELP DEFEND FREE SPEECH ON CAMPUS

**Courageous students in Manitoba
challenge student union
censorship in court
– defending free speech on
campus**

Dear Friend of Justice,



When it comes to arrogance and censorship, student unions across Canada are giving universities a run for their money!

Our latest **court application** has been launched against the Brandon University Students' Union (BUSU).

Brandon University Students for Life is a campus student group at Brandon University in Manitoba. They seek to generate debate and discussion on campus regarding euthanasia, abortion, suicide and other life issues. Students for Life has been active on campus since 2012, when it first sought student group status from BUSU. BUSU initially denied recognition to Students for Life, but after receiving a **warning letter** from the Justice Centre, BUSU changed its position and granted student group status to Students for Life in September of 2013. Since then, Students for Life has conducted numerous peaceful events on campus to engage with fellow students.



But in November 2015, **BUSU revoked Students for Life's student group status, without informing Students for Life of its intentions to do so, and without providing any opportunity for Students for Life to defend itself!**

Students for Life did not learn that its group status had been illegally revoked until January of 2016, when its communications director Andrew Madill attempted to book space in the Mingling Area of the Student Union Centre. BUSU informed Mr. Madill that Students for Life no longer had student group status, and was therefore ineligible to book space in the Mingling Area, a prime location for student groups to engage their fellow students.

This sudden news forced Students for Life's long-time president, Catherine Dubois, to make a difficult decision to cancel its event in the Mingling Area, for which it had been preparing for weeks. Catherine understands well that, without official club status, it's practically impossible for students to organize events, invite speakers, sponsor

debates, or set up a table during Student Groups Day in September. This is why denying club status to students with unpopular beliefs has become **the most and common and effective tactic** used by student union bureaucrats to deny students with unpopular views their right to



express themselves.

If BUSU’s decision to revoke club status—without notice!—was not egregious enough, the way BUSU then attempted to justify its illegal behaviour was far worse.

When Students for Life asked BUSU to explain their decision, they stated that Students for Life had violated BUSU policy by making students feel “uncomfortable” and “intimidated” during past events, and that discussing issues of abortion acts as a “trigger” for some students, making them “not feel safe”.

Since when is university meant to be “comfortable”? University is a challenging place. Students are challenged every day to confront and solve problems using critical thinking skills, prime among them being

frank discussion, reasoned debate and critical inquiry. Universities have historically served as forums for then-unpopular opinions, including equal rights for women and minorities, the abolition of slavery, ending wars, or preserving the environment. But today, Universities seek to enforce political correctness and the status quo.

The list of absurd justifications goes on.



BUSU also told Students for Life it was denied club status because BUSU believed (incorrectly) that Students for Life was affiliated with an unidentified U.S. pro-life group, which BUSU claimed was “anti-gay,” and that Students for Life was affiliated with a Canadian pro-life group that BUSU “had issues with”.

Since when is it a crime to be “associated” with another peaceful group?

BUSU further argued revoking club status was necessary because Students for Life events in April 2014 and October 2015 did not align with the pro-choice stance of the Canadian Federation of Students.

Yes, Canadian student unions are taking “official” stances on behalf of their members on numerous issues, including abortion, aboriginal affairs, the Israel-Palestine conflict, and many more. This in spite of the fact that Canadians, including Canadian students, hold diverse opinions on all these subjects, but are forced to join the student union and pay student union dues in order to study at the

university.

BUSU also claims that Students for Life is a “redundant” group, arguing that the issues of suicide and abortion are already being “addressed” by the Women’s Collective and the LGBTQ Collective.

Friend, I’m sure you see the dangerous and faulty logic being used by BUSU. This is like banning the campus Conservative club as redundant, since politics are already being “addressed” by the campus NDP. It’s like banning a Muslim club because religion is already being “addressed” by a campus Christian group.

Student associations like BUSU are driving an ideological crusade against any student who doesn’t share their strange left-wing, totalitarian ideology. And they see no problem with it.

In fact, BUSU told Students for Life they could regain their club status if they changed their views. BUSU insists that you “can’t really talk about personal issues,” can’t hold events that make students feel “uncomfortable”, and **“you can’t put your views out to a larger body.”**

The Justice Centre has filed a **court application** on behalf of Students for Life against BUSU to fight back against this outrageous attempt to silence free expression on campus.

[But we can’t win without your help.](#)

Our court application against BUSU is one of four court applications we have launched against student unions in the past year.



At Ryerson University in Toronto, a group of

students calling themselves the Men's Issues Awareness Society were denied official club status by their student union. **Again, purely because the student union disagreed with the students' opinions.** The Ryerson Students' Union claims that men have "systemic privilege," and that a group focused on men's issues would "harass" women and make women feel "unsafe" merely by peacefully discussing men's concerns.



The Justice Centre has also had to file court applications against the University of Toronto Mississauga



Students' Union, as well as the Student Association at Durham College and UOIT, after student groups on each campus were denied club status, too.

Their crime? **Being pro-life!**

It's no secret that being pro-life on a university campus today means a certain amount of social ostracizing from your peers. But students in Canada are facing a much bigger battle, against the same student unions they are required to pay fees to in order to go to school.

Just read our research findings in the *Campus Freedom Index*. Since we began reporting on the state of free speech in 2011, **we have found more than 20 cases of students facing illegal censorship on campus because of their views.**

In addition to these four court applications against student union censorship, we are also fighting a battle for free speech at the University of Alberta on behalf of students who have been slapped with a \$17,500 "security fee" just to be able to express themselves on campus. Outside of the universities' taxpayer-funded ivory towers, the Justice Centre is also defending freedom of association, and freedom of conscience and religion.

All of these fights are crucial to protecting the free society. They are also expensive.

We have a talented, capable legal team, consisting of two lawyers (Marty Moore and Jay Cameron) and one articling student (James Kitchen) who will become a qualified lawyer in 2017. They are doing great work. Our court proceedings require hundreds of hours of time to conduct proper legal research and analysis, to prepare well-written court briefs and factums, and to put forward effective and persuasive advocacy in the courtroom. Our legal team carries out this work happily and enthusiastically while earning salaries **that are about half of what they could be earning at a regular corporate law firm.** They work for the Justice Centre because they believe in our mission, and want to help defend freedom in Canada.

I know that you want to defend freedom, too. And I am so thankful for the support that you, and over 2,500 other Canadians, have been providing since the Justice Centre was founded in 2010.

Your generosity has helped us to secure more than 20 court victories and favourable out-of-court settlements.

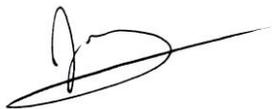
The fight for freedom is never over, and never “finally” won. Attempts to silence unpopular views are becoming more widespread than ever before—especially at our universities.

Friend, will you help us win the legal fight for Catherine Dubois and her fellow students?

All students deserve to have a voice on campus. **Help us give these students back their voice.**

Please support our court applications with a tax-deductible donation today. You can donate securely at www.jccf.ca, or mail a cheque to the address here below.

Sincere thanks,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'John Carpay', written in a cursive style with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

John Carpay, B.A., LL.B.
President

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