

**CARP'S OPEN LETTER
TO PREMIER MCGUINITY:**
Re: Human Rights Commission "Reform"
Violates Human Rights of Ontarians

CARP is disturbed by your government's ill-proposed changes to the Human Rights Commission – as well as the process chosen to carry them out. By splitting the roles of the Commission and the Tribunal, you are imposing barriers to Ontarians' human rights.

What you are considering will weaken the Commission's current effective service to Ontarians – and, in turn, strip many of their human rights. First of all, the present free system will automatically be replaced by litigation. This will be costly to the consumer. In fact, the major beneficiaries will be the proponent of the changes: the legal community – and probably the Province because the cost to the consumer will limit the number of decisions by the Tribunal. Needless to say, many Ontarians will be unable to pay legal fees.

In CARP's experience, it is very important for the Commission to be directly engaged in human rights issues. By limiting this role, the depth of their reports and their capacity to act on their findings could be seriously eroded. CARP worked with the Commission on "Time for Action," an outstanding document which we promoted across the country as a model to fight age discrimination.

Mr. Premier, do the right thing! Put your proposal on hold and engage in broad public consultation. Otherwise, the message to Ontarians is that you are willing to violate their human rights based on their ability to pay. The example of British Columbia's tampering with its Human Rights Commission shows that ill-conceived changes do impede the course of justice.

Surely such a major action must include input from all Ontarians. We urge you to reconsider you plan until you have heard the voice of the people.

CARP is Canada's Association for the Fifty-Plus. A non-profit organization with about 250,000 members in Ontario -- and 400,000 across the country. CARP's mandate is to promote and protect the rights and quality of life for older Canadians.

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