



Abortion Rights  
Coalition of Canada

Coalition pour le droit à  
l'avortement au Canada

*Your Voice for Choice*

*Canada's only national political pro-choice advocacy group*

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## City of Williams Lake Denies Anti-Choice Group's Request to Proclaim "Celebrate Life Week"

Williams Lake — The Abortion Rights Coalition of Canada (ARCC) is pleased that the Mayor and Council for the City of Williams Lake rejected yesterday a request by a local anti-abortion group to approve a "Celebrate Life Week" for Sep 27 to Oct 4.

The same group (Choice for Life Society of Williams Lake) received City approval for a similar proclamation last fall. However, ARCC and several local pro-choice activists complained, and the City found itself embroiled in a media controversy. Those opposing the proclamation pointed out that this anti-choice group is primarily devoted to opposing the right of women to access legal abortion, and that the group and its mandate is not one the City should be seen publicly supporting. The right to abortion is an essential human right for women and transgender people, because *not* having that right violates their constitutional rights to life, liberty, bodily security, privacy, and conscience.

In a news report, Williams Lake Mayor Walt Cobb hinted that the City might stop approving all proclamations, but ARCC said that would be an "unfortunate loss" for the citizens of Williams Lake. "The City can play a vital and positive role in promoting community groups and their activities and causes, and this benefits the entire City," said Joyce Arthur, Executive Director of ARCC.

"The City simply needs to ensure that proclamation requests conform to human rights codes and the *Charter of Rights and Freedoms*, as well as any other reasonable community guidelines." Arthur added that it's also important that Council members verify the group's mandate and primary activities to ensure that the request is not an attempt to smuggle in a hidden agenda under the pretense of human rights advocacy, as was the case with the anti-choice group's proclamation request.

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