



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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Rona Ambrose Must Resign

Minister for Status of Women Voted for Motion 312, and Against Women's Rights

NATIONAL — Canada's national pro-choice group is demanding the resignation of Rona Ambrose, the Minister for Status of Women. The Minister voted in favour of anti-abortion Motion 312 on Wednesday, which sought to bestow legal personhood on fetuses in order to recriminalize abortion.

"Not only did Ambrose openly defy her Prime Minister's instruction to his Cabinet to vote against the motion, she threw women under the bus," said Joyce Arthur, Executive Director of the Abortion Rights Coalition of Canada (ARCC). "Her job is to advance the rights and interests of women, so her Yes vote on the motion was a shocking failure and a slap in the face to the women of Canada. She's proven herself to be unfit for the job and must resign immediately."

Seven other Cabinet Ministers joined Ambrose in her repudiation of Harper and women, as well as two Ministers of State. Four Liberal MPs also voted in favour of the motion. The NDP, Bloc Québécois, and Green caucuses were united against it.

Although ARCC is gratified at yesterday's decisive defeat of Motion 312, Arthur says the motion was "insulting, outrageous, a waste of time and taxpayer's money, and a distraction from the real issues facing us. The Supreme Court already ruled on this issue long ago – basically, if fetuses have rights, pregnant women don't. This motion represents a profound disrespect for women, because we know that we can trust pregnant women to make the best decisions for themselves, their families, and their fetuses. Women's wombs are not the property of the state."

"Let's be clear – the anti-choice movement hoped this motion would be their ticket to re-criminalizing abortion," said Arthur. "It wasn't about asking for a 'study' or a 'dialogue,' or trying to update a 400-year old law. Nor was it about examining the medical evidence as to when a fetus becomes human. It was about finding a way to define fetuses as legal persons so that abortion could be banned to the greatest extent possible, preferably from the moment of fertilization. MP Stephen Woodworth and the anti-choice movement tried to cloak this motion as something more innocent, because they know the Canadian people overwhelmingly support women's rights and don't want to ban abortion."

“It’s a disgrace that this motion was even allowed to be brought forward for a vote,” said Julie Lalonde, an Ottawa-based ARCC spokesperson. “It means that our government – including Rona Ambrose – does not trust women, and it means that Parliament believes it’s perfectly acceptable to debate whether women should have basic human rights – even in the 21st century, in a modern western democracy that gave women constitutional equality 30 years ago. The motion was an attempt to return women to an era when they were defined solely by their motherhood role.”

“Women will never go back,” vowed Lalonde. “Today, we celebrate the defeat of the motion, but we know that the fight for our freedoms will never be over as long as fanatics and fundamentalists keep insisting on taking them away. Eternal vigilance is required.”

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