

Educational Resources

PARLIAMENTARY COMMITTEE SIMULATION - VEGETABLE HARMONY ACT

Minister and Witness Materials

Vegetable Growers Association of Canada

Use the notes below to help you prepare to make your speech to the committee. Do not just read out the arguments as they are listed on this sheet. Use them to help you organize what you plan to say, but then do so in your own words. Add your own additional arguments that support the same viewpoint.

What is the Vegetable Growers Association of Canada?

The VGAC represents farmers who grow vegetables in Canada. There are hundreds of farmers who belong to this organization. Some of them have very large farms that grow huge crops of vegetables for grocery stores and frozen or canned vegetable companies. Some of them are small farmers who grow organic vegetables and sell their food in local stores and farm markets. Farmers pay an annual membership to the VGAC so that the VGAC will speak for them to government and will promote vegetable eating in Canada.

What is our position on the bill?

We oppose this bill.

What are our arguments?

- Vegetables are an important part of a healthy diet. The *Canada Food Guide* recommends that children and teens eat between four and eight servings of fruit and vegetables each day.
- This bill will hurt vegetable farmers. If parents are limited in serving vegetables to children, they will buy fewer vegetables for their families.
- If Canadians begin to buy fewer fresh vegetables, farmers will not be able to earn a living and may have to close their farms or change to different crops.
- If vegetable farms close, a variety of fresh vegetables will become harder to find and will possibly become more expensive.

What would we like the committee to do?

- Do not pass a bill that stops parents from serving vegetables to their families.
- Suggest to parents that they ask children about what vegetables they would like to eat, so that children begin to enjoy eating them as part of their daily diet.

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Parents' Council of Canada

Use the notes below to help you prepare to make your speech to the committee. Do not just read out the arguments as they are listed on this sheet. Use them to help you organize what you plan to say, but then do so in your own words. Add your own additional arguments that support the same viewpoint.

What is the Parents' Council of Canada?

The PCC is a group of Canadian parents. The PCC believes that parents should have the right to raise their children the way they think is best. We encourage the government to make laws that give parents this right.

What is our position on the bill?

We believe that parents, not government, should decide what vegetables should be served to children. We are against this bill.

What are our arguments?

- Parents should have the right to raise their children the way they think is best. Government should only make laws about parenting when the laws are made to protect the safety and health of children.
- Vegetables are healthy for everyone. Responsible parents will serve a variety of vegetables to their children so they get all the healthy vitamins and minerals that they need.
- This bill does nothing to protect the health and safety of children.
- There are lots of ways for parents to serve vegetables without causing conflict. They can be blended into soups, stews, breads and juices in a way that children won't even notice them. Parents can involve their kids in helping choose a variety of vegetables to eat.
- The penalties in the bill are much too high and would hurt families.
- Some children enjoy eating vegetables. The process in the bill that would allow parents to serve vegetables is too difficult. Many families will break the rules because of this, and will risk getting into trouble.

What would we like the committee to do?

Do not approve the bill.

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Committee for the Rights of Children

Use the notes below to help you prepare to make your speech to the committee. Do not just read out the arguments as they are listed on this sheet. Use them to help you organize what you plan to say, but then do so in your own words. Add your own additional arguments that support the same viewpoint.

What is the Committee for the Rights of Children?

The CRC is a group that tries to protect the rights of children in Canada. It was formed four years ago by two cousins, who were then twelve and fourteen years old. The group of volunteers regularly watches for laws and government policies that will be unfair to children. While the CRC recognizes that there are certain things that children should be prevented from doing for safety reasons — e.g., driving cars — it believes that otherwise children should be more protected in making their own choices.

What is our position on the bill?

We support the bill, but would like to see other unpopular vegetables added to the list.

What are our arguments?

- Adults have the right to choose their own food based on how it tastes. There is no reason children shouldn't have the same right.
- The bill only applies to the worst tasting, yuckiest vegetables. Parents will be free to serve other better-tasting vegetables.
- Children can get the same vitamins that exist in the yucky vegetables by eating good vegetables and fruit and by taking vitamin supplements.
- Children should have the right to live in a home that is happy and peaceful, without daily battles over food.
- Children who like these vegetables will still have the right to eat them, as long as they follow the procedure outlined in the bill.

What would we like the committee to do?

- Pass the bill as written.
- Add other terrible vegetables like cauliflower to the list.

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The Restaurant Association of Canada

Use the notes below to help you prepare to make a presentation to the committee. Do not just read out the arguments as they are listed on this sheet. Use them to help you organize what you plan to say, but then do so in your own words. Add your own additional arguments that support the same viewpoint.

What is the Restaurant Association of Canada?

The Restaurant Association of Canada is an organization for people who own and manage restaurants, cafeterias and coffee shops all over Canada. The RAC makes presentations to the federal and provincial governments to let them know what restaurant owners think about new laws that impact restaurants in Canada.

What is our position on the bill?

We are worried about how the bill will impact us if the new law applies to restaurant meals. We would like the committee to amend the bill so that restaurant meals are not included.

What are our arguments?

- It will be confusing and difficult for restaurants to change menus to remove restricted vegetables from the meals eaten by children.
- Some of our recipes may contain small amounts of restricted vegetables. It is not fair to expect us to change our recipes to eliminate these vegetables.
- If we have a children's specialty menu that does not contain restricted vegetables, parents may still order regular meals for their children.
- If parents break the law by feeding their children restricted vegetables in a restaurant, we are worried that the restaurant owner or manager could also receive a fine.

What would we like the committee to do?

Amend the bill so that restaurant meals are excluded.

Minister of Food

Who is the Minister of Food?

I have been appointed to be in charge of the government department called the Department of Food. The Department has many programs that have to do with Canada's supply of food. These include testing food for safety and labelling food for nutritional values.

What is my position on the bill?

My government supports this bill. We think it will be helpful for Canadian families. We would like the Committee to work hard to hear the views of Canadians, to review it carefully and to make any amendments that would make the bill even better than it is now.

Introducing the bill

List the key things that this bill will do. You should have approximately five items on your list. Include the list of vegetables restricted and the penalties for parents who break the law.

Why should the committee support this bill?

- Children are usually more sensitive to new tastes or textures in food than adults are. While some children are not fussy eaters, those who are more sensitive will find certain foods to be really terrible tasting.
- As long as children are offered fruit and better-tasting vegetables to eat, they will get enough nutrition to be healthy. They don't need to eat the vegetables they hate.
- This bill will lead to much more harmony in a family's day-to-day life. Removing the dinner-time argument about food will be good for families.
- Food should be celebrated and enjoyed.
- Perhaps if children are never exposed to yucky vegetables, they will learn a positive attitude about eating vegetables and will eat more of them as adults.