

URGENT SUPPORTER ALERT!

Westbank self-government agreement Federal parliament set to strip away fundamental Canadian rights

The federal government recently introduced a piece of legislation to establish a self-government agreement with the Westbank Indian Band of British Columbia.

The proposed Westbank Self-Government Agreement (Bill C-11) will shield the Westbank government from the application of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms. The Agreement will also give the Westbank Grand Council authority to make laws that may prevail over federal and provincial laws.

By shielding the Westbank government from the Charter, Westbank laws would be immune from a Charter challenge. In other words, Westbank laws could discriminate between residents in Westbank based on their race, religion, or gender and the victim of discrimination could not use the Charter to strike down the offence.

The Westbank Indian Band population is 594 of whom 383 live on the reserve. There are more than 7,500 non-Aboriginal people who live or own businesses on the Westbank reserve.

The Agreement will give the Westbank Indian Band members absolute power over the entire community of 8,000 people. The Westbank Indian Band will collect taxes from non-Aboriginal people who live or

own businesses on the reserve, but the Indian Band will not let these people participate in community elections. This amounts to taxation without representation.

If Members of Parliament pass this agreement, Canada's elected officials will deny certain Canadians the right to vote in community elections and in so doing will strip fundamental rights of Canadian citizens. These rights took decades to achieve and could be taken away by the stroke of a pen.

Furthermore, this Agreement will set a precedent which other Indian

Bands plan to follow. Clearly, this Bill will have national repercussions for generations.

This is a disastrous piece of legislation and is why your CTF is strongly encouraging you to contact your local Member of Parliament, Minister of Indian Affairs, and Leader of the Official Opposition, Stephen Harper to persuade them to vote against the Westbank Self-Government Agreement, Bill C-11.

Incredibly, all parties are going to support the measure and have supported it through the first two readings.

To contact your local Member of Parliament simply look in the "Blue Pages" of your telephone directory under "Member of Parliament".



Contact today!

Minister of Indian Affairs:

Andrew Mitchell
House of Commons
Ottawa, ON K1A 0A6
Tel: 613-996-3434
Fax: 613-991-2147
Email: Mitchell.A@parl.gc.ca

Leader of the Official Opposition

Stephen Harper
409-S Centre Block
House of Commons
Ottawa, ON K1A 0A6
Tel: 613-996-6740
Fax: 613-996-0785
Email: Harper.S@parl.gc.ca

TaxAction is an issues and action update sent monthly to supporters of the CTF. To receive TaxAction by e-mail or for other enquiries or changes: e-mail us at admin@taxpayer.com, phone 1-800-667-7933, fax 1-800-465-4464, or write 105-438 Victoria Ave. E., Regina, Sask. S4N 0N7. Visit the CTF's website at www.taxpayer.com for additional material and daily updates.