

Voice of the people

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Assaults on civil society

Citizenship and Immigration Minister Jason Kenny's removal of the reference to gay rights in Canada's new study guide for immigrants (March 3 article) is one of a series of ongoing assaults on Canadian civil society. The prorogation of Parliament, the characterization of the coalition as "socialists and separatists," inaction on climate change, scrapping the gun registry, cutting taxes for the wealthy, attempts to whittle away pay equity for women and public funding for political parties, disdain for the arts and culture communities as "elitist," thwarting Parliament's attempts to obtain documents on the Afghan detainees scandal, the elimination of funding to faith-based human rights organizations like Kairos, and now this attack on gays and lesbian rights — all are illustrations of the agenda of Stephen Harper's Regressive Conservatives.

And then, Stephen Harper flashes a goofy smile, or puts on a sweater, or plays a Beatles' tune on the piano, or shmoozes with Olympic VIPs, and the popularity of the Conservative party jumps three points in the polls.

Harper succeeds in both fooling some of the people some of the time, and in dividing and conquering the political opposition. His party received 37.6 per cent support in the last federal election, yet he rules like King Stephen I. If Canadians come to realize how these individually ignominious acts fit into a larger assault on progressive civil society, perhaps that reign will end.

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<http://thechronicleherald.ca/Letters/1170933.htm>