Bill C-51 cannot be salvaged; it must be scrapped

The Right Honourable Stephen Harper, P.C., M.P., Prime Minister of Canada
Office of the Prime Minister
80 Wellington Street
Ottawa, ON K1A 0A2

April 13, 2015

Dear Prime Minister,

We, the undersigned organizations and individuals, call for the immediate and unconditional dismissal of Bill C-51: Anti-Terrorism Act, 2015. We are extremely concerned by the potential impact of this legislation, which fails to strike the balance between protecting Canadians and safeguarding our cherished rights and freedoms as protected in the Charter.

Bill C-51 has been widely criticized by experts and Canadians across the country as being irresponsible, dangerous, and ineffective. This law will detrimentally impact our social frameworks, democratic values and fundamental rights. Our security agencies currently possess wide-ranging powers to address security threats, and the need for this broad legislation has not been demonstrated. While minor amendments to the bill have been suggested, amendments cannot repair such an extensive and dangerous piece of legislation.

As Canadians learn more about and better understand the bill, their concern for its contents and potential impact continues to grow. The bill’s consultation process has been incredibly hasty, not even allowing for our own Privacy Commissioner to speak to the potential impact that this broad legislation could have. Legislation that could in any way affect our rights and freedoms cannot be created in such a rushed manner. Canadians must be consulted, and expert recommendations and criticism must be factored into shaping the country’s policies.

We agree with the over 179,000 Canadians who have called on the government to scrap this irresponsible, dangerous and ineffective legislation through StopC51.ca and other petitions. Bill C-51 is fundamentally flawed and the proposed amendments do little to mitigate the erosion of our rights and freedoms if it is passed into law. We write to you requesting that the federal government listen to the wishes of the majority of Canadians, and withdraw this piece of legislation. We will not be pressured or scared into sacrificing our rights and freedoms.

Yours sincerely,

Amnesty Canada
Avaaz
BC Civil Liberties Association (BCCLA)
BC Freedom of Information and Privacy Association (FIPA)
Canadian Association of Professional Employees / Association canadienne des employés professionnels
Canadian Civil Liberties Association
Canadian Journalists for Free Expression (CJFE)
Centre for Law and Democracy
Centre for Free Expression, Ryerson University
Consumers’ Association of Alberta
CWA/SCA Canada
Electronic Frontier Foundation
Free Dominion
Greenpeace Canada
Institute for the Study of Privacy Issues (ISPI)
International Civil Liberties Monitoring Group (ICLMG)
Leadnow
National Council of Canadian Muslims (NCCM)
OpenMedia
PEN Canada
Pirate Party of Canada
Privacy & Access Council of Canada
Privacy International
Public Service Alliance of Canada, BC Region
Real Art Gaining Strength
Right to Know Coalition of Nova Scotia (RTKNS)
Samuelson-Glushko Canadian Internet Policy & Public Interest Clinic (CIPPIC)
Telecommunities Canada
Youth Vote Canada

Dr. Adam Molnar, Lecturer, Department of Criminology, Deakin University
Alexander Ferworn, CD, Professor, Associate Chair and Graduate Program Director, Department of Computer Science, Ryerson University
Ali Miri, Professor, School of Computer Science, Ryerson University
Andrew Clement, Professor, Faculty of Information, University of Toronto
Ann Cavoukian, Ph.D., Executive Director, The Privacy and Big Data Institute, Ryerson University
Professor Anver Saloojee, Ryerson University
April Lindgren, Associate Professor, Ryerson University School of Journalism
Arthur Cockfield, Professor, Queen’s University Faculty of Law
Avner Levin, Associate Professor and Chair, Law & Business Department, Ted Rogers School of Management, Ryerson University
Barry Grills, Past Chair, The Writers’ Union of Canada, Past Chair, Book and Periodical Council
Bill Bonner, Ph.D., Associate Professor, Faculty of Business Administration, University of Regina
Carl Benn, PhD, Professor, Department of History, Ryerson University
Chris MacDonald, Associate Professor, Director, Jim Pattison Ethical Leadership Education & Research Program, Ted Rogers School of Management, Ryerson University
Dr. Christopher Parsons, Managing Director of the Telecom Transparency Project, Citizen Lab at the Munk School of Global Affairs, University of Toronto
Cindy Blackstock, Associate Professor, University of Alberta
Professor Colin J. Bennett, Department of Political Science, University of Victoria
Dagmar Rajagopa, Ph.D., Retired Professor of Economics, Ryerson University
David H. Flaherty, Professor Emeritus, University of Western Ontario
Professor David Lyon, FRSC
Professor Dave Mason, School of Computer Science, Ryerson University
David Checkland, Associate Professor, Department of Philosophy, Ryerson University
David J. Phillips, Associate Professor, Faculty of Information, University of Toronto
Dwayne Winseck, Professor, School of Journalism and Communication, Carleton University
Eva Hourihan Jansen, PhD Candidate, Faculty of Information, University of Toronto
George F. Bielmeier, Professor Emeritus, School of Social Work, Ryerson University
Grant Buckler, Journalist, Member of CJFE Canadian Issues Committee
Greg Elmer, Professor of Media, Ryerson University
Heida Mani, Mining Consultant
Professor Henry Navarro, School of Fashion, Ryerson University
Jaclyn Law, Co-Editor, CJFE Review of Free Expression in Canada
Dr. Javad Alirezaie, PhD, PEng, SMIEEE, Professor, CVIP Lab Director, Electrical & Computer Engineering, Ryerson University
Jonathan Obar, Assistant Professor, Faculty of Social Science and Humanities, University of Ontario Institute of Technology
Joseph H. Carens, Professor of Political Science, University of Toronto
Josh Tabish, Board Member, Media Democracy Project
Kathleen Greenaway, Ph.D., Research Fellow, Privacy & Cyber Crime Institute, Ryerson University
Kathryn Church, PhD, Director and Associate Professor, School of Disability Studies, Ryerson University
Laurence Kearley, Barrister and Solicitor, Associate Professor (Privacy Law), University of Ottawa
Leslie Regan Shade, Associate Professor, Faculty of Information, University of Toronto
Linying (Lin) Dong, Associate Professor, Ph.D., Ted Rogers School of Information Technology Management, Ryerson University
Lynn Lavallee, PhD, Associate Professor, Associate Director, School of Social Work, Ryerson University
Mary Elizabeth Rubens, Entertainment Industry Professional, Producer, Writer, Actor
Matthew Bouchard, Doctoral Student, Faculty of Information, University of Toronto
Dr. Mehrunnisa Ali, Professor, Ryerson University
Mel Watkins, Emeritus Professor, University of Toronto
Michael Carter, PhD Candidate, Surveillance Studies Centre, Queen’s University
Michael Geist, Canada Research Chair in Internet and E-commerce Law, University of Ottawa
Mitu Sengupta, Associate Professor, Department of Politics & Public Administration, Ryerson University
Nalini K. Singh, Academic Librarian, Faculty of Information, University of Toronto
Neil Thomlinson, Ph.D., Associate Professor, Politics & Public Administration, Ryerson University
Paul Jonathan Saguil, Barrister and Solicitor, Member of CJFE Canadian Issues Committee
Paul Knox, Associate Professor, School of Journalism, Ryerson University
Peter Jacobsen, Founding partner, Bersenas Jacobsen Chouest Thomson Blackburn LLP, and Chair of CJFE Canadian Issues Committee
Peter Puxley, Former Parliamentary Bureau Chief, CBC Radio News, former Senior Producer on CBC TV’s The National Magazine
Philip Coppack, Ph.D., Professor of Geography, Ryerson University
Philippa Lawson, Barrister & Solicitor
Rainerio Tayco, Communist Party of Canada
Rebecca Noone, PhD Student, Faculty of Information, University of Toronto
Reza Hamidizadeh, CEO, Ontario International Trading Inc.
Robert Hudyma, Professor Ryerson University
Ron Deibert, Director, The Canada Centre for Global Security Studies and the Citizen Lab, Munk School of Global Affairs, University of Toronto
Ronald Stagg, Professor, Ryerson University
Samuel Trosow, Associate Professor, Faculty of Law and Faculty of Information & Media Studies, University of Western Ontario
Dr. Sandra Smeltzer, Associate Professor, Faculty of Information and Media Studies, University of Western Ontario
Sarah Spinks, Secretary-Treasurer, Spin Free Productions Inc.
Dr. Sedef Arat-Koc, Associate Professor, Department of Politics and Public Administration, Ryerson University
Seyed M. Hashemi, Professor, Ryerson University
Stephanie Perrin, PhD candidate, University of Toronto
Terry Costantino, PhD Candidate, Faculty of Information, University of Toronto
Professor Toni Samek, University of Alberta
Valentina Capurri, Assistant Professor, Department of Geography and Environmental Studies, Ryerson University
Cc: The Honourable Steven Blaney, Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness
The Honourable Thomas Mulcair, Leader of the Official Opposition
Mr. Justin Trudeau, Leader of the Liberal Party of Canada
Mr. Mario Beaulieu, Leader of the Bloc Québécois
Ms. Elizabeth May, Leader of the Green Party of Canada
Mr. Daniel Therrien, Privacy Commissioner of Canada