

PRESS RELEASE

AN OPEN LETTER FROM BURNABY TEACHERS TO PREMIER CLARK ON THE ISSUE OF TELEVISED TRIALS

On October 13, 2011, the Executive Committee of the Burnaby Teachers' Association sent a letter to the Honourable Premier Christy Clark regarding her decision to order TV and radio coverage of the Stanley Cup Riot court proceedings. The full text of the letter is as follows:

October 13, 2011

The Honourable Premier Christy Clark
Premier of British Columbia
Box 9041
Station PROV GOVT
Victoria, BC V8W 9E1

Dear Ms. Clark,

The Executive Committee of the Burnaby Teachers' Association requests that you publicly retract your order that Crown prosecutors ask judges to allow TV and radio coverage of court proceedings for those accused of participating in the June 2011 Stanley Cup riot. The reasons for our request are as follows:

- 1) The order is at odds with the Government of British Columbia's support for the Roots of Empathy program, which, in the words of one Grade 4 student, teaches that "We don't have to hurt other people, just because we're mad or sad, or because we want power". It is confusing for children to see empathy being promoted by their teachers while the Premier of British Columbia supports public shaming of suspects.
- 2) As Premier, you need to set an example to British Columbians of higher aspirations, which, in our view, include empathy and respect for due process. Appealing to baser values, such as hate and retribution, sets an extremely poor precedent.
- 3) TV and radio coverage of the above-mentioned trials will bring shame not only to those accused, but also to their families and friends. Many of the accused, and those close to them, have already paid a price well ahead of trials, even before victims have had a chance to be heard. There is enough suffering in this story already, and adding further to the cycle of violence only creates more suffering and solves nothing.

It is not too late to retract your order, and we encourage you to do so as soon as possible. Clearly you have made a mistake, and we think you will set a very good example by admitting to it publicly. If so, you will have our empathy and respect. In the meantime, we believe it will be instructive for you to listen to Anna Maria Tremonti's interview with Shannon Moroney, wife of a convicted criminal, on the October 11 edition of CBC's The Current: <http://www.cbc.ca/thecurrent/>

Kind regards,

Executive Committee
Burnaby Teachers' Association