



Dennis Bevington
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February 5, 2007

Dennis Bevington urges all Northern MPs to vote against Bill C-31

Ottawa – During a speech today in the House of Commons, Western Arctic NDP Member of Parliament Dennis Bevington called on all MPs with Northern ridings to vote against **Bill C-31, *An Act to Amend the Canada Elections Act and the Public Service Employment Act.***

The NDP Member stood up for ordinary Northerners, especially those in remote communities who lack the services readily available in southern urban ridings. Since he was elected to office, Bevington has been approached by several constituents and Members of the NWT Legislative Assembly who are concerned about Bill C-31. If passed, it would impose new requirements that all Canadians must present photo identification at federal polling stations in order to cast their vote. The Liberal Party is in support of this Conservative bill.

“These types of voting restrictions will hit people in Northern ridings the hardest -- Aboriginal people who live a simple life in many communities across the North who may not have a driver's licence. They may have a hunting licence, but that does not have a photo on it.

Once again, we are going to see the type of legislation that arguably might have some place in large urban ridings, but will have a detrimental effect on Northern Canadians, and Canadians in isolated communities across the country.

“There are many MPs who are sitting here from Northern ridings who represent these communities and are going to vote for this legislation. I urge them not to. I urge them to stand up for their constituents, stand up for Northern Canadians and vote against it.

“This bill is one that I feel really stands against the roots of our democracy,” said Bevington.

The Western Arctic MP also spoke out against Clause 18, which would give political parties access to the birthdates of all Canadian voters.

“This information would be on the record permanently. Political parties can use this information to target voters with partisan messages and to seek out financial donations. So how could this be a good thing for Canadians?”

“To think that the Conservative Party -- which always puts up a good fight for the rights of individuals -- and the Liberal Party, which attempts to do the same thing, are supporting this legislation today. What is it with them? Have they taken leave of their own values? Can they not understand there are some things in this life that should be sacred to people? My goodness, I do not understand how this even came forward,” said Bevington.

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