



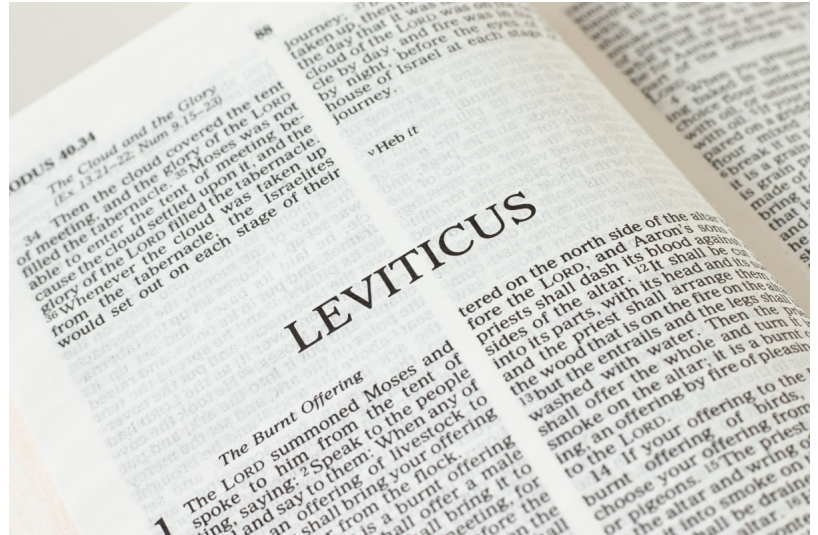
Written by [Michael Tennant](#) on June 8, 2026

Canadian Senate Passes Law Criminalizing “Hateful” Bible Verses

The Canadian Senate put its stamp of approval Thursday on a bill that criminalizes quoting Bible verses considered to be “hate speech.”

Bill C-9 passed the Senate 45-13, with two senators abstaining and 35 not even attending the vote — business as usual in an appointed body whose quorum is just 15 senators.

“This is a dark day for religious freedom and free speech in Canada,” Jeff Gunnarson, national president of Campaign Life Coalition (CLC), said in a [statement](#). “The passage of this deeply troubling legislation, however, will not stop us from speaking the Word of God, even when biblical truths are increasingly being labelled as hateful by those who are hostile to Christianity.”



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C-9 Not Benign

[The New American](#) reported in March, after the bill passed the House of Commons:

Introduced by Liberal Justice Minister Sean Fraser, the “Combatting Hate Act” increases the maximum penalties for crimes “motivated by hatred based on race, national or ethnic origin, language, color, religion, sex, age, mental or physical disability, sexual orientation or gender identity or expression.” For example, an offense whose maximum sentence is currently two years will have a maximum sentence of five years if the government believes it was motivated by hatred; a sentence of 14 years may be increased to life under the same circumstances. This, of course, gives prosecutors and judges considerable leeway to punish people whose opinions they dislike.

As if that weren’t bad enough, the bill also removes a religious exemption to the existing law’s prohibitions of “communicating statements” that promote or incite “hatred against any identifiable group.” Previously, an individual who could demonstrate that, “in good faith, they expressed ... an opinion on a religious subject or an opinion based on a belief in a religious text” would not be guilty of a hate crime. Now, quoting Bible (or Torah or Koran) verses that condemn, e.g., homosexuality, transgenderism, or abortion could land someone behind bars.

“Under the guise of combating hate,” contended Gunnarson, “Bill C-9 opens the door to the criminalization of peaceful religious and pro-life expression in Canada.”



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This is not mere alarmism. During parliamentary debate, Liberal MPs explicitly stated that such was their objective. The CLC noted that “Liberal MP John-Paul Danko cited ‘anti-abortion hate’ as an example of the kind of expression the bill could be used to target.” And high-ranking Liberal MP Marc Miller [said](#) no one could claim to have read aloud biblical passages showing “clear hatred towards ... homosexuals” in “good faith” and thereby be exempt from criminal prosecution for hate speech.

Interpretive Dance

The vague bill, riddled with subjective terms such as *detestation* and *vilification*, is open to a wide range of interpretations — the better to intimidate political conservatives and religious believers into policing their own speech.

According to the [Canadian Constitution Foundation](#):

It is unlikely passages from religious texts read *on their own* will lead to criminal charges. The Crown would need to believe that the intention of reading the text was to incite hatred, promote hatred or promote antisemitism.

However, with the [good-fatih] defense now removed, certain passages from religious texts could now lead to charges depending on the context including when they are read, where they are read, and what other words are used when they are read.

Consider, for example, the Bible passage Leviticus 20:13. It states: “If a man lies with a male as with a woman, both of them have committed an abomination; they shall surely be put to death; their blood is upon them.” Reading this passage on its own (or writing it) would not likely lead to criminal charges despite removal of the defense. However, depending on context, including what else is said, it may now be possible that speaking this Bible passage would lead to criminal charges. This would depend on whether it is used in a way that can be characterized as extreme vilification or detestation, which may be evidenced by the hallmarks of hate. [Emphasis in original.]

Eclectic Skeptics

Bill C-9 has been the object of intense criticism from both Right and Left, religious and secular. “Hundreds of religious groups called on the government to amend or abandon it, including Christian leaders of every denomination, and Jewish, Muslim, and Mormon leaders,” wrote [LifeSiteNews](#). Furthermore,

the law was also opposed by the Black Legal Action Centre, Association des juristes progressistes du Québec, the British Columbia Civil Liberties Association, the Canadian Civil Liberties Association, the Canadian Labour Congress, the Centre for Free Expression, the Chinese and Southeast Asian Legal Clinic, the Coalition for Charter Rights and Freedoms, Democracy Watch, the International Civil Liberties Monitoring Group, and hundreds of other organizations.

Despite this, the Liberals, who control the government, have proceeded with the bill. Although it is headed back to the Commons for consideration of an amendment added in the Senate, the government has already indicated it will pass. Bill C-9, for all intents and purposes, is law.



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Believe it or not, the bill could have been even worse. A Senate committee approved an [amendment](#) making it a hate crime to question still-unproven [allegations](#) of widespread abuse, including the coverup of children's deaths, in Canada's now-defunct residential-school system for indigenous people. Fortunately, the Senate as a whole rejected the amendment.

"No government has the right to silence Canadians for peacefully expressing their God-given moral and religious convictions," declared Gunnarson.

"God will not be mocked. We will continue to proclaim His Word."



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