

*Private Members' Business*

Unfortunately, government-enforced provisions start with the assumption that all employers are guilty, even though 1993 Nobel laureate and economist Gary Becker notes that discrimination poses internal as well as external costs on a company. In other words, discriminatory employment decisions cost firms money. If they do not select the best person for the job, that translates directly to a drop in productivity and a drop in the bottom line. Since the overriding objective of a company is to make money, discrimination will be short-lived and the marketplace will police discrimination. This theory is borne out by the statistics I have already given and the ones that will follow in the rest of this speech.

• (1735)

In terms of public support for employment equity, a December 1993 Gallup poll showed 74 per cent of Canadians to be opposed to such programs. This high percentage is not a surprise to me because to this day I have never met a person who wanted to get a job or be promoted on the basis of their gender or their race rather than the skills or merits they have brought to the job.

Sadly, this government, as usual, is not the slightest bit interested in what the majority of Canadians think and is bound and determined to stick to an agenda of social engineering that will unfortunately have the opposite effect to that which is intended.

I correspond on a regular basis with a young lady in Vancouver named Kim Oliver. Kim has a disability called Fragile X Syndrome. Despite having this disability, Kim has a great sense of humour, she has great ambition and quite an artistic flair. Kim has indicated in her letters that she wants exactly what any other young person wants. She wants to be able to support herself through the skills that she can bring to the workplace.

I would like to read from one of Kim's letters. I quote:

The United Farm Women of the 20's and 30's were western women who withstood the hardships of life on the farm alongside their husbands. They were responsible for lobbying for the vote, universal social programs, and pensions for widows and orphans. They also helped their men form unions and collectives. I identify with these women because, unlike today's feminists, they took matters into their own hands, using printing presses to spread the word via a women's newspaper, travelling to the Geneva Convention in the 40's and most impressive of all—got men to let us vote! Unlike NAC, Vancouver Status of Women and other special-interest groups, the UFW didn't have the media nor did they have millions in government funding—So why keep funding ethnic groups or women's groups? All they do is tell women, especially poor 'visible' minority women with disabilities, that we are the victims of racism, sexism, white male imperialism—and that we will never be equally paid, heard, educated because of men and men's cultural symbols. Makes you want to scream, doesn't it?

Kim identifies with people who had to work hard for what they achieved. She also makes it clear that she does not want to be treated like a victim by special interest groups.

Kim also writes that she has found that members of the Reform Party treat her like a fellow Canadian instead of putting her into a box labelled "disabled" or "disadvantaged".

I wish I could hold up some of Kim's drawings to show to the House her artistic flair, but unfortunately we cannot use props in the House, so I would ask members to believe me when I say they are very good. I think Kim will eventually find a place in the workforce to utilize her artistic skills. I know she wants to

achieve that not through employment equity but through her own hard work.

This should not be interpreted as meaning that the disabled do not need any assistance to gain skills or that the government should not be involved in helping them gain access to the workplace. However, it does mean that we should not insult their intelligence and their abilities by artificially pushing them to the front of the line for employment. Like everyone else, they just want the chance to prove their worth and their true value through open and unbiased job interviews.

Obviously, there are fewer opportunities in the job market for someone with Fragile X Syndrome, and that is where every one of us as caring Canadians can help. We must be aware of the problems and we have to do what we can to support them. For Kim, I would like other members of this House to give me some examples, or perhaps the public who become aware of this debate, of where there have been successes in Canada achieved by people with Fragile X Syndrome. What sort of jobs have they managed to fill? How have things worked out for them? I hope they will write to me so I can pass these successes on to Kim, to give her even more encouragement for the future.

• (1740)

In wrapping up, I would like to read one more piece from a letter she wrote to me last September:

We have a ministry responsible for women's equality, plus multiple feminist groups who are government-funded. As well, 'visible' minorities and natives have just as much government attention.

So why does the Ministry of Social Services and Human Resources still classify women, minorities and natives as disadvantaged?

She also mentions:

Why is it that our social services and human resources departments have no 'Ministry of the Disabled'? If we are to be Foster Children, couldn't the Provincial/Federal governments acknowledge our special needs?"

I know that Kim is not alone in feeling this way. She represents a very large group of thoughtful people with disabilities who really feel that the government is not representing their needs.

In their well-meaning attempts to promote the equality of opportunity that we all support, the government is actually fostering legislative racism and pitting identifiable groups against one another.

In their pursuit of social engineering they are inadvertently sowing the seeds of racial conflict by forcing employers to emphasize differences in race and gender instead of the differences in skills and suitability that should be the basis for employment.

I have here a letter and a questionnaire from the Chief of Defence Staff to all regular force and primary reserve members, announcing a survey of Canadian forces to identify the representation of aboriginals and visible minorities.

Is it not racist to be carrying out a survey specifically designed to identify persons by race? Is it really appropriate for a government to have a database identifying its employees by racial background?

Respondents have to identify themselves as black, Chinese, Filipino, Japanese, Korean, South Asian, East Indian, Southeast