

For Immediate Release

British Columbia courts uphold Canada's polygamy law

November 23, 2011 (Ottawa) - The Institute of Marriage and Family Canada is pleased to see that the BC court upheld s. 293 of the Criminal Code.

Polygamy does indeed bring harm to society in various forms and we are pleased the judge recognizes that. "Research shows that two-parent, male-female marriage is the strongest family form we know particularly for the raising of children. It is critical that we not only maintain but strengthen this norm in society," says Executive Director Dave Quist.

In his ruling, the Honourable Chief Justice Bauman states that "Polygamy has negative impacts on society flowing from the high fertility rates, large family size and poverty associated with the practice. It generates a class of largely poor, unmarried men who are statistically predisposed to violence and other anti-social behaviour. Polygamy also institutionalizes gender inequality. Patriarchal hierarchy and authoritarian control are common features of polygamous communities. Individuals in polygynous societies tend to have fewer civil liberties than their counterparts in societies which prohibit the practice."

The practice of polygamy institutionalizes patriarchal domination, gender inequality and a host of other negative behaviours. Conversely, research shows that two-person, man-woman marriage is the strongest family form, bringing a host of physical and emotional health benefits to children and the adults involved.

Oftentimes we are led to believe that our relationships are only private matters. This ruling shows this is not the case, given the radically different outcomes associated with polygamous marriage as compared with other family forms, outcomes which affect the way we live. "This sends a strong message across Canada that further changes to the institution of marriage are deleterious to society and should not be entertained," concludes Quist.

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