



Halifax  
**INITIATIVE**  
d'Halifax

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Hon. Kathleen Wynne  
Premier  
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Jim Wilson  
Leader, Official Opposition  
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Andrea Horwath  
Leader, NDP  
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February 13, 2015

Dear Premier Wynne, Mr. Wilson and Ms. Horwath:

*Re: Bill 83 An Act to amend the Courts of Justice Act, the Libel and Slander Act and the Statutory Powers Procedure Act*

The Halifax Initiative is a coalition of Canadian non-profit organizations founded over twenty years ago. We seek to enhance the transparency and accountability of government actors and institutions that promote Canadian companies overseas. The Halifax Initiative pursues its objectives through research and analysis. We promote public education and engagement. We contribute to policy debate and engage with decision-makers, both nationally and internationally.

The Halifax Initiative and its staff were recently threatened with a SLAPP (strategic litigation against public participation) suit regarding a publication that we produced in collaboration with international colleagues. The publication exposes serious human rights abuse associated with the operations of multinational companies that receive public financing. While we stand behind the publication, we felt compelled to withdraw it from

public circulation. We are a small organization with limited resources that is unable to support the demands of civil litigation. Likewise, our staff lack the resources necessary to mount an effective defence should they be sued in their personal capacity.

In discussions with international colleagues with whom we co-authored the publication, it became clear that public interest organizations and advocates are highly vulnerable to SLAPP suits in Ontario relative to other legal jurisdictions.

We urge you to adopt safeguards that protect public interest organizations in Ontario. The measures contained in Bill 83 will allow organizations such as the Halifax Initiative to continue to contribute to the development of informed public policy.

Yours truly,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Karyn Keenan". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Karyn Keenan  
Director  
Halifax Initiative