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Mr. Stockwell Day

Foreign Affairs Critic, Conservative Party of Canada

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OPEN LETTER TO STOCKWELL DAY, CONSERVATIVE FOREIGN AFFAIRS CRITIC

HUMAN RIGHTS GROUPS ASK: AS FOREIGN AFFAIRS MINISTER, WOULD YOU REVERSE CANADA'S INTERNATIONAL POSITION ON HUMAN RIGHTS?

Dear Mr. Day,

In many countries around the world, **lesbians, gays, bisexuals and transgender people** face **arrests, torture**, and even **death** because of their sexual orientation or gender identity. People living with HIV/AIDS face stigma, discrimination and **human rights abuses** (sometimes including **murder**) because of their **HIV status**.

This year alone, United Nations Special Rapporteurs have documented abuses of the human rights of lesbians, gays, bisexuals and transgender people, including **arbitrary arrests, deprivation of food and water, beatings, rape and murder**. UN High Commissioner of Human Rights (and former Justice of the Supreme Court of Canada) Louise Arbour has also highlighted these concerns.

Canada has played a **leading role internationally in condemning these persistent human rights violations** and calling for measures to ensure that lesbians, gays, bisexuals and transgender people enjoy the basic human rights protections to which all human beings are entitled. Similarly Canada has advocated internationally for recognition of **women's sexual and reproductive rights** and respect for the **International Guidelines on HIV/AIDS and Human Rights**.

Canadians value our reputation on the world stage as a country committed to maintaining and advocating for human rights globally.

As international organizations committed to recognition of the human rights of lesbians, gays, bisexuals and transgender people, respect for women's sexual and reproductive rights and health, and a rights-based approach to HIV/AIDS prevention, treatment and care, **we are understandably concerned by:**

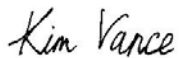
- * Your opposition to including sexual orientation in human rights legislation on the basis that "no group should have special protective legislation based on sexual activity. ... **What about the next step? Those who lobby for sex with children?**" (Globe & Mail, July 4, 2000; Claire Hoy, "Stockwell Day: His Life and Politics" (2000), pp. 75, 77).

- ✘ Your record of **opposing protections** for lesbians, gays and bisexuals from **discrimination**, from **hate speech**, from equal **immigration** rights and from **equal relationship recognition**.
- ✘ Your comments that you “do not support abortion and ... would personally favour measures to protect human life in Canadian law”, that you support **cutting public abortion funding**, and that “**women who become pregnant through rape or incest should not qualify for government-funded abortions** unless their pregnancy is life-threatening.” (Edmonton Journal, 1992; response to Campaign Life Coalition questionnaire, June, 2000)

As Foreign Affairs critic, can you confirm that the Conservative Party, if elected, would maintain Canada’s policy of advocating for an end to the human rights violations faced by lesbians, gays, bisexuals and transgender people? Can you further confirm that Canada will continue to advocate for recognition of women’s sexual and reproductive rights and health, and a rights-based approach to HIV education, prevention, treatment and care?

Thank you for your attention to this matter, and we look forward to your prompt response so that Canadians may cast an informed vote on January 23, 2006.

Sincerely,



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on behalf of:

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Action Canada for Population and Development
Canadian HIV/AIDS Legal Network
Egale Canada