

BILL C-26 WILL GIVE FEDS SWEEPING NEW POWERS

In February Russia launched a vicious attack on Ukraine, though it's not the one that's received all the attention. This assault involved a telecommunications satellite, and it interrupted Internet service not only in Ukraine, but across Europe.

Canada was spared the fallout from that attack, but we haven't been immune to assault. Just a few weeks before the Ukraine attack, Global Affairs Canada was subject to a days-long Russian cyber assault.

Bad actors, be they nation-states seeking to undermine global stability or compromise the national security of other countries, or private individuals or organizations seeking to steal a quick buck through the use of ransomware, hover in the shadows of the virtual world, waiting to strike on the unsuspecting.

The world has therefore been scrambling to prepare, and Canada introduced its major effort in the form of Bill C-26. The bill, an Act Respecting Cyber Security, will, if passed, grant the feds sweeping new powers. We need to ensure there are sufficient oversight measures to ensure they're not subject to abuse.

The law applies primarily to federally regulated businesses that provide critical infrastructure services in four sectors: finance, telecommunications, energy and transportation. Among other things, such businesses will be required to implement cyber security programs to prepare for and respond to cyber attacks.

The feds will be authorized to "direct" companies' efforts to protect themselves from threats, and will have the ability to fine businesses for failure to follow the directives. The bill prohibits companies from divulging the contents of the directives, or even the fact that directives have been issued. By cloaking everything in secrecy, the feds' behaviour is effectively insulated from any form of scrutiny or review.

Bill C-26 will also require businesses to report cyber attacks to the federal Cyber Centre. Currently, reporting is voluntary unless the attack could cause significant harm to an individual, in which case the incident must be reported to the privacy commissioner.

Some companies do report voluntarily but many others are reluctant to do so for fear of alerting malicious actors to their vulnerabilities. Yet by not reporting, similar businesses remain vulnerable.

Given that reporting could have profound adverse effects on individual businesses, it's important to mitigate such damage as best as possible. In most circumstances, releasing the name of the affected business is unnecessary — rather, providing details like the type of business, revenue and number of employees should help similar businesses to fortify themselves.

The feds should also offer assistance to businesses, especially small- and medium-sized ones, in their efforts to protect themselves. Since Bill C-26 applies only to federally regulated businesses, the feds and provinces need to work together to ensure their efforts are consistent, coherent and capable of protecting the national interest.

Finally, just as cyber threats are ever evolving, so too must be our efforts to combat them. Flexibility is key, as we must be prepared to refine and adjust our strategies and to accept that the war against cyber crime might never end.

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Mississauga Arts Council photo

(From left) Mississauga artists Ashley Beerdat, Carla Gonzalez-Casanova, Yen Linh Thai, Lynn Taylor, Ray Vidal and Veronika Benjamin, standing in front of the LCBO Port Credit Mural, a 486-foot long installation comprising their original artworks, on the west wall of the LCBO Port Credit. The project from the Mississauga Arts Council and Port Credit BIA highlights the culture and community of Port Credit.

LETTERS & COMMENTARY

HIGHWAY NOISE

After receiving another inadequate response to complaining about the overwhelming noise of Hwy. 403 behind Remea Court and Thom Gardens in Erin Mills, I feel compelled to vent again in the hopes that somebody will listen.

A beautiful breeze blew from the usual northwest direction through my sliding door screen on the back deck, as I sat watching the Canadian Open on June 12.

The TV was at double its normal volume as I strained to hear the words. The constant roar of truck and motorcycle exhausts, and the usual passenger car tire road noise, was almost deafening, and my 74-

year-old male ears probably weren't hearing the real volume peak.

This has been going on since back in the 1980s with no one really doing much to help. The City of Mississauga was pretty accommodating to get this highway built, despite the protests of residents around here, and the ministry has done very little to safeguard the health of everyone nearby.

An attempt to pacify these people was made in the promise that we would be placed on a retrofit noise barrier construction list a very long time ago.

If such a list exists, where are we on it? Is anybody monitoring our situation to decide who gets priority on this list? What has

been done lately?

For this ministry to just sit and let this continue, with no attempt to check it, is nothing short of disgusting. One of you even threw literature in my mailbox looking for a vote or two. Really?

JIM CLELLAND

IS DEMOCRACY FAILING?

Ontario now has an overwhelming majority in power with just 17 per cent of the eligible vote. That's depressing.

Even more so is the continued low turnout for younger voters who should be a little more concerned that Ford has been about as anti-environment as possible.

DAVE WRIGHT

WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU

SUBMIT YOUR LETTER TO THE EDITOR TODAY!

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