

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL CRITIC



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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MPP RAPS RAPPER'S VIOLENT MESSAGE

Crack down on artists who advocate violence and hate - Bryant

Queen's Park: - Liberal Attorney General Critic Michael Bryant is urging the Harris government to crack down on recording artists who advocate violence and hate. The M.P.P. for St. Paul's is referring to the arrival in Toronto of the notorious rapper Eminem, who is set to perform Thursday evening at SkyDome.

"Nobody wants to curb free speech but some of this rapper's songs cross the line. Some of the lyrics suggest that violence against women is 'cool' - even funny. It's time for the Attorney General to investigate and if necessary, prevent Eminem's concert on Thursday, or prosecute if any crimes take place." says Bryant.

Bryant is suggesting a number of steps that the A-G could take in dealing with the appearance of Eminem, including bringing an injunction to stop the rapper's show on the basis that his performance would be violating the *Criminal Code* and prosecuting the rapper under the hate crime, indecency or obscenity provisions of the *Criminal Code* if necessary.

Valerie Smith, who brought her complaint against Eminem to the Toronto Hate Crimes Unit, says "this guy is advocating hatred and violence against women. It's time for the Harris government to stop talking tough about cracking down on domestic violence and start *doing* something about it."

Bryant is also calling for preventive measures to ensure that parents have a say in what their kids listen to. Right now in Ontario, a child of any age can purchase whatever CD they want - no matter how violent or offensive. "I doubt that parents would want some of these songs in their kids' hands, so let's leave it up to them to decide. We need to start regulating music the same way we do movies. If you're not old enough, you can't buy it without a parent," Bryant says.

Bryant is asking the Harris government to regulate the sale of CDs and tapes in Ontario. For products labelled "Parental Advisory Explicit Content," Bryant suggests they be sold only to those 18 years of age or older with proof of ID. The Liberal Attorney General Critic also wants the Tories to consider mandatory criteria through joint regulation of movies, video games, and music products. Currently in Ontario, CDs and tapes are self-regulated by the industry.

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Attorney General and
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Ms. Valerie Smith
Box 119, 4500 Kingston Road
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Dear Ms. Smith:

Thank you for your letter regarding Eminem performing in Ontario.

Domestic violence is a serious matter. Advocating such behaviour is utterly reprehensible.

Federal hate crime legislation offers protection only on the basis of race, religion and ethnicity. This current inadequacy of the *Criminal Code* would make it difficult to proceed with a prosecution for an alleged hate crime relating to gender.

The Ontario government has taken a leadership role in protecting women from domestic violence. I have written to the Federal Minister of Justice, the Honourable Anne McLellan, calling for amendments to be made to section 319 of the *Criminal Code*. I will continue to ask the federal government to expand the definition of identifiable groups to include gender.

We must have the tools to bring to justice those who spread hatred against others. It is time for the federal government to provide such tools to prosecute those promoting hatred against women by amending the *Criminal Code*. The public has a right to be safe.

Thank you again for writing and for your words of support.

Sincerely,

James M. Flaherty
Attorney General
Minister Responsible for Native Affairs