



# DEBATES OF THE SENATE

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## **THE SENATE**

**MOTION TO INSTRUCT SENATE ADMINISTRATION TO REMOVE  
THE WEBSITE OF THE HONOURABLE LYNN BEYAK FROM  
ANY SENATE SERVER AND CEASE SUPPORT OF ANY RELATED  
WEBSITE UNTIL THE PROCESS OF THE SENATE ETHICS  
OFFICER'S INQUIRY IS DISPOSED OF—MOTION IN  
AMENDMENT—DEBATE CONTINUED**

Speech by:

The Honourable Patricia Bovey

Tuesday, April 24, 2018

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MOTION TO INSTRUCT SENATE ADMINISTRATION TO REMOVE THE WEBSITE OF THE HONOURABLE LYNN BEYAK FROM ANY SENATE SERVER AND CEASE SUPPORT OF ANY RELATED WEBSITE UNTIL THE PROCESS OF THE SENATE ETHICS OFFICER'S INQUIRY IS DISPOSED OF—MOTION IN AMENDMENT—  
DEBATE CONTINUED

**Hon. Patricia Bovey:** Honourable senators, I was talking about the feelings of “its” and getting over “its.” I had just said that in civil society, we must come together to resolve the “its,” and we can only do so with facts. Now I say we must come together in reconciliation. We cannot condone anything that deepens or hides the hurt of the shattered lives of the residential school survivors and their families.

Colleagues, Canada is a rich country. It is rich not only because we have the resources that put us on a solid economic basis, not rich only because we have access to food and a means to contribute substantially to world food security, but rich particularly because of who we are — a country whose citizenry includes people from every country in the world. We are rich because we are seen to be welcoming to immigrants and refugees, rich because of the original peoples of Canada, First Nations, Inuit and Metis, rich because of their heritage, traditions and history, and because our collective history has witnessed many exciting and exhilarating highs and coming together.

Yet our history has also had truly painful lows, the residential schools being a hugely dark chapter in Canada's history. A crisis affecting the well-being and opportunities of generations of First Nations and Inuit citizens from coast to coast to coast. Our strength as a nation comes not from how we handle good times but how we approach and deal with our most difficult times, the personal and those affecting us all.

We must remember that the treaties made with the First Nations are not First Nations treaties. They are shared treaties of, for and by us all, promises made by and for all. We in the Senate represent all, serving all Canadians in this place. We must keep the conversations going. We must build pathways of reconciliation.

In recent decades, I have seen the growth of understanding of these treaties and recognition that the responsibilities for them are held by all. Non-Indigenous Manitoba artist Tim Schouten underlines this collective responsibility clearly in his Treaty Lands Project. His goal is to bring attention to issues of long-term accountability and troubled cultural trusts emanating from those formal agreements.

Drawing from history and his own sensibility of the prairies, the landscape is his primary entry point. Schouten visited each treaty site, researched the treaties themselves and the subsequent impacts. He interviewed First Nations elders and Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal historians. He built his works to underline our shared histories. They are philosophical archaeological digs, becoming a foundation for dialogue towards constructive meaningful futures honouring the intent of the initial treaties. Executed in wax on parchment, he portrays the rough terrain,

long horizons and characteristic prairie light. He incorporates text, clauses from the treaties themselves. One hangs in my office as a reminder of our collective responsibilities.

I want to share a story from one of my most troubled professional days — an afternoon in the early 1980s. While Nuu-chah-nulth and Coast Salish artist Art Thompson was installing his exhibition at the Art Gallery of Greater Victoria, he told me something that still haunts me, as vivid today as it was those decades ago. It was the story of what happened to him at the Port Alberni Residential School. He asked if he should tell anyone. My response was “Yes,” and I would support him in any way I could. He went public for his daughter. Alas, Art died of cancer before the Truth and Reconciliation Commission began and how I wish he had had the opportunity to bear witness and tell his story. He did, however, through his art, leave a lasting legacy for us all.

In Ottawa earlier this year, the Carleton University Art Gallery presented the major exhibition of Governor General Visual Arts award recipient Robert Houle. It featured his 2008 residential school series composed of his one-a-day for a month oilstick works recalling his time in Sandy Bay Residential School. They're visceral, direct, true, moving and so important. I commend them to you. They were purchased several years ago by the University of Manitoba's School of Art with monies from the York Wilson prize. That same university is home to the Truth and Reconciliation archives. These works prove to me that we don't get over it. In 1999-2000, the Winnipeg Art Gallery raised funds to buy Houle's large painting, “Sandy Bay.” For me, it is one of the most important works in Canadian art.

When Robert spoke to the staff about the work then, he told us about the school, his parents being forced to send him, his sisters going through one door, he and his brothers the other, and that the brothers and sisters could not see each other thereafter. There are no doors in that painting. The windows are veiled. Robert spoke kindly of one priest and still does, but in no way does that one kindness erase the horrors of his experiences. Robert's composure and almost lack of emotion struck me then — the reality and impacts of his school experience still remain deeply buried within. It took time for him to reach the point where he could unveil and actually express them, just as it had for Art Thompson.

Houle's expression of truth came almost 10 years later through those powerful drawings. Recently, he told me that having shared his realities, his deep anger is now past. He has built his bridge, but the scar is irreparable. He will never forget, nor will his family.

I watched last spring's residential school totem pole raising at UBC on TV, wishing I was there. Nothing is more empowering than being part of a pole raising. Several things in particular have stuck with me — obviously the pole itself and the school on its top with the copper nails representing victims. However, a comment by a young First Nations woman will be with me forever. She said with this pole and the conclusions and recommendations of the TRC, most First Nations have accepted that the hurtful and damaging past of the schools happened, and now they can begin

to heal. But she said she felt sorry for those of us who are not First Nations, as many have not accepted the reality of our past and until we do, we cannot begin to heal.

She's right. Until we accept a loss, a theft, a wrong, we cannot heal, whether we are the victim or the perpetrator.

Colleagues, I urge us all from the bottom of my heart, as we represent all Canadians, to do our part to build those critically important bridges across the crevices and divides in our society. There have been dark times in our history where divides have been far greater than confluences. I would hate us to develop another period of divide now when we have the opportunity to build. Divides in our society are not a richness. Our richness as a nation is the welcoming, understanding, honouring of our treaties and peoples and the recognition and healing of our wrongs.

Residential schools under the guise of education set out to eradicate whole cultures. They were the root of the societal crisis and only real education with a genuine sharing of learning and perspectives will pull us out and enable a growing together. Real learning is lifelong learning. May we all deepen our understanding of these realities so, as was said in Vancouver, we can all start to heal.

As Senator Sinclair cautioned Canada's museum community a year ago, it took years to get into this situation and it will take years to get out.

Working towards real reconciliation today, using all our means appropriately — schools, our websites, our public pronouncements and our actions — the healing towards a solid future will start now. But if we prolong the divide, extenuate the misfacts by presenting misnomers, the healing cannot and will not start. I believe as senators we have a duty to lead, and to lead now. We have a duty to fulfill our responsibility to truth so all viewpoints are founded in fact and not on illusion. I have called on museums, galleries, archives and libraries to fulfill their responsibilities to teach, to show and to be a platform for dialogue and debate on all societal issues concerns and conundrums, including this dark past of residential schools. And I will continue to make that call.

Honourable senators, I again turn to Canada's artists. They have the insights, vision and ability to see and express societal crises long before the rest of society. The Lesson by Alberta First Nations artist Joane Cardinal-Schubert depicts the attempt of the residential schools to eradicate First Nations languages. From the 1990s, pre-dating the establishment of the TRC, this work was

a gutsy, clairvoyant and important clarion call to understanding and redress. Or consider First Nations artist Faye Heavyshield's 1985 work "Sisters," a circle of outward facing pointed gold shoes giving voice to another societal injustice. How many more years did it take to establish the national inquiry into murdered and missing Indigenous women and girls?

Art is truly a work in reconciliation. This month, Peguis First Nation's Lorilee Wastasecoot, now from the University of Victoria, escorted paintings by the children of McKay Indian Residential School to the Reconciliation Conference in Thompson — the first step of repatriation to that school's survivors and their families.

Colleagues, we all have a duty to see, hear, listen and learn. May the days of learning never stop for me, for us, for Canadians and for Canada. Please, let's all go to a better place and look at our websites, speeches and actions to ensure we create that place proactively for all to understand the truth facts and realities, the horrific fallout, human cost, suicides, lost lives and threatened theft of whole cultures through Canada's residential schools. There must be nothing on our websites or in our actions that pulls the substance of the Senate and senators down. We must ensure we do not perpetrate fake news, mistruths or unfounded conclusions. We must, as senators, singly and collectively fulfill our obligations to all.

I support Senator Pate's motion as amended.

I truly believe there should be no place for offensive or erroneous material or discriminatory comments on or under any Senate banner at public expense.

My concern is not to curtail expression. I agree with Senator McCallum that we need to encourage discussions to bring us to a better place, one of honesty, respect and reconciliation, while ensuring public resources are not used to perpetuate hurtful comments. I can go nowhere without hearing that plea from both Indigenous and non-Indigenous Canadians. Many express it with anger. We must lead the building of the real richness of our country with pride. I fear that, if we don't, we will instead build an irreconcilable divide, a divide which will only continue the pain of thousands of shattered lives through even more generations. That would not be a build of pride. That build, being without foundation, would only diminish or destroy Canada's richness.

Colleagues, we are at a time when Canada is at an age when we can face those past harms and treat all with equal respect and truth. Let us move forward with "reconcili-action."

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