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Being gay is not a choice, but protecting them is

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The Province

Friday, May 13, 2011

So, I'm gay. I've decided to be a homosexual. I'm fed up with trying to make relationships

work with women. And sometimes when I go to the gym there's this guy with big muscles who smiles at me. I've never looked at men in a sexual way before, but after much deliberation I've come to the conclusion that I should try out the gym guy, have some really hot sex and maybe a fulfilling relationship.

I know turning homosexual will mean I sometimes get treated badly. People will make nasty comments. If I go work somewhere else, I might not get promoted if the bosses find out I'm gay. I might get beaten up once in a while. If things don't work out with the gym guy I might end up hanging around places where other gay guys go, and some other guys might come along with bats or golf clubs and bludgeon me to death, like Aaron Webster in Stanley Park. I could get tortured and hung on a fence to die like that kid in Wyoming.

But I've made my choice, and I'm going to stand by it.

So, thanks, John Cummins, former B.C. Member of Parliament and now designated leader of the provincial Conservative Party. You're so right, John: I don't deserve any extra protection under the federal Human Rights Act. I'm gay because I chose to be gay.

Cummins this week revealed that as an MP, he voted against adding to the Human Rights Act a prohibition against discrimination based on sexual orientation.

"Some of the research tells me that there's more of an indication that that's a choice issue," Cummins told Victoria's CFX radio. And he's "not comfortable" with trying to determine whether hate is the motive when homosexuals are attacked.

Fortunately, I made my choice relatively late in life. Kids who decide early on to be gay, lesbian or bisexual have a tough go of it, according to a new cross-Canada study.

Two out of three non-heterosexual high-school pupils don't feel safe in their schools, and homophobic comments, even by teachers, are common and accepted, a survey of 3,700 Canadian students found.

OK, I have a confession to make, and it's not about the guy from the gym (sorry, John, but you can find that kind of stuff online).

I'm not gay. I am sexually attracted to women. For me to choose to be homosexual is as preposterous a notion as a white man deciding to be black.

It's handy, if you're homophobic, to espouse this fallacy of choice. But Cummins' statements are revealing in light of the fact that the Human Rights Act bans discrimination on another basis that's indisputably a matter of choice: religion.

By Cummins' reasoning Muslims should be free to refuse jobs to Christians and vice versa. A restaurant owner should be able to put up a sign saying "No Service to Jews." We should have the right to keep Hindus out of our public swimming pools.

We have a Human Rights Act to combat discrimination and prejudice-based attacks, which remain frequent and widespread. Those gay, lesbian and bisexual kids who fear going to school, those kids who are bullied for being homosexual or appearing to be homosexual, those homosexuals who are beaten and who are killed and who commit suicide -it's beliefs like Cummins' that are to blame.

Here's a real choice, John: How about you decide not to be a bigot?

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