

# **NEWS RELEASE**

## **Coalition for Action on Child Sexual Abuse in Cornwall**

**October 19, 2002**

### **Press Conference and Protest**

### **Protesters to Challenge Premier on Sex Abuse Cover UP**

### **MPP s Guzzo and Cleary to Attend**

As part of the Canadian Survivors' Partnership which includes Breaking the Silence, Canadian Alliance for the Prevention of Professional Sexual abuse, Comité des enfants victimes d'abus sexuels et physiques dans des entreprises Québécoises, The LINKUP in Canada, Mouvement action justice, and SNAP Canada, the Coalition for Action Against Child Sexual Abuse in Cornwall will be protesting and participating in a press conference Saturday October 19, 2002 at 2:00 p.m. in front of the Nav Canada Conference Center in Cornwall.

While the Canadian Survivors' Partnership, meeting here in Cornwall for their first National Conference, will call for a National Healing Centre, the release of all victims/survivors silenced by gag orders, public inquiries at provincial /territorial levels (Bill 48) and a Federal Crown Inquiry, the Coalition for Action Against Child Sexual Abuse in Cornwall will be challenging Premier Ernie Eves on the Sexual Abuse Cover Up in Cornwall and will be demanding an open independent public inquiry into the child sex abuse allegations, investigations and judicial process in Cornwall in support of MPP Gary Guzzo's Private Members Bill 48.

Garry Guzzo, MPP and John Cleary MPP will participate in support of Bill 48

## **WHY**

Ten years of crisis. Investigations into child sexual abuse allegations in the Cornwall community over the past decade have raised many unanswered questions and left citizens in doubt over the ability of their institutions to function properly in the protection of our children.

Why would the previous Premier, Mike Harris, and now Premier Ernie Eves, the Provincial Legislature and the Attorney General's office turn a blind eye to and ignore the request for an Independent Public Inquiry into the child sex abuse allegations, investigations and judicial process in Cornwall, when requested by resolutions from the City of Cornwall, South Stormont Township, the United Counties of Stormont, Dundas, Glengarry, by the petition of over 12,000 citizens of Cornwall, the Coalition for Action on Child Sexual Abuse in Cornwall and by a private members Bill, Bill 48 put forward by MPP Garry Guzzo and supported by Cornwall Liberal MPP John Cleary, as well as the the Ontario Legislators who voted not once but twice to have the Bill brought forward?

## Background

- In 2000 MPP Garry Guzzo put forward a Private Members Bill, Bill 103 requesting an independent public inquiry into Police Investigations of Sexual Abuse Against Minors in the Cornwall Area - an investigation into how two police investigations in Cornwall failed to find evidence of child sexual abuse in the community when a private citizens group was able to turn up evidence that eventually led to a third police investigation and the charging of 15 high-profile community leaders, including Catholic clergy, with more than 100 counts of child sexual abuse.
- October 12, 2000 MPP Garry Guzzo's Private Members Bill 103 was supported by Ontario Legislators October 12, 2000 by a vote of 47 in favour, 3 against.
- October 24, 2000 MPP John Cleary submitted a petition to the Legislature signed by 12,000 concerned citizens of Cornwall requesting an independent public inquiry in support of MPP Garry Guzzo's Private Members Bill 103.
- October 25, 2001 Ontario Legislators supported MPP Garry Guzzo's Private Members Bill 48 (originally Bill 103) by a vote of 56 to 20.
- Each time, the Bill was left to die on the order paper without final reading before the house when the provincial legislature adjourned for the summer.
- May 13, 2002 The thirteen charges against Father Charlie McDonald, the first person charged under Project Truth over 79 months ago (6 years ago) were stayed as a result of delays in the government of advancing its case. 95 % of the delays in this case were the result of the defence. The Alexandria-Cornwall Diocese of the church is on record as having paid \$32,000 to silence one of the former altar boys who had filed a complaint against this priest. The church has since covered up these allegations and the justice system has failed miserably in bringing the suspect to trial.
- May 17, 2002 In response, the Coalition for Action On Child Sexual Abuse in Cornwall was established – a coalition of diverse stakeholders, local, regional and national, to “press for *truth, justice and accountability* from both secular and religious authorities for the appalling violations of legal and Christian principles in the child sexual abuse investigation in Cornwall. (Refer to attached brochure) The Coalitions Goals:
  1. An independent public inquiry by the Provincial Government into the child abuse allegations and coverups in the Cornwall area, as proposed in Bill 48 sponsored by MPP Garry Guzzo and MPP John Cleary.
  2. Full disclosure by the Catholic church of all allegations of child sexual coverups and payoffs in the Diocese of Alexandria – Cornwall.
  3. Justice and support from secular and religious authorities for the victims.
- Coalition successful in pushing for open independent inquiry with church, city and townships as below.
- June 26<sup>th</sup>, 2002 South Stormont Township Council in an unanimous motion let it be resolved that whereas investigations into child sexual abuse allegations in the community have raised many unanswered questions and left citizens in doubt over the ability of their institutions to function properly in the protection of our children; Council supported the efforts of MPP Garry Guzzo and MPP John Cleary through Bill 48 to have the province of Ontario have an open independent public inquiry into the child sexual abuse allegation and investigations; and be it further resolved that this resolution go to all other councils in Stormont, Dundas and Glengarry asking for their endorsement. (see attached)

- July 8, 2002 The Council of the Corporation of the City of Cornwall resolved that whereas there continues to be concerned members of the public that question the results of the investigations and judicial process, that the Ontario Government through the office of the Attorney General address the concerns of the public in a manner that will clarify and answer these questions; and that it would support a public enquiry into the causes of any delays of laying charges and the timely prosecution of those charges that were initiated by Project Truth Investigations; and any other matters deemed appropriate to inquire into. It was further resolved that the Council of the corporation of the City of Cornwall encouraged the Attorney General to further review the actions of the Cornwall Police Service in these matters to reconfirm the findings of three independent investigations. (see attached)
- July 15, 2002 the United Counties of Stormont, Dundas and Glengarry supported the resolution from the township of South Stormont concerning requesting the Province of Ontario to launch an Independent Public Inquiry into the child sex abuse allegations and investigations. (See attached)
- July 17, 2002 the Coalition tried unsuccessfully to meet with Premier Ernie Eves at a regional cabinet meeting held in Belleville to press for an Independent Public Inquiry as requested by the City of Cornwall, the United Counties of Stormont, Dundas and Glengarry. Discussion was denied.
- August 21, 2002 Cornwall Mayor Brian Sylvester, at a meeting of the Association of Municipalities of Ontario told by Attorney General, David Young that his city council resolution asking the province to sanction an independent public inquiry into the Project Truth investigations would not happen in the foreseeable future. (Standard Freeholder, August 21, 2002 "Province Blocks Project Truth Inquiry")
- June 16, 2002 MPP John Cleary stood in the legislature and asked the Tory government to ask for full reading of Bill 48 and to pass it before summer recess. He renewed the call for a public inquiry into the allegations of child sexual abuse in his county noting that the Coalition and citizens of Cornwall want answers to the questions that have plagued the community for years. Premier Ernie Eves asked him to leave it in his hands.

**SO WHERE IS THE PUBLIC INQUIRY – NOT HAPPENING! ARE WE TO BELIEVE THAT THIS IS A DEMOCRATIC GOVERNMENT – WHILE IT KEEPS THE SEX SCANDAL UNDER WRAPS – KEEPS THE GUILTY SAFE!**

**OUR NEW PREMIER HAS YET TO PROVE THAT HE IS ANY DIFFERENT THAN HIS PREDECESSORS – THAT HE BELIEVES IN AND IS COMMITTED TO JUSTICE FOR ALL COMMUNITIES INCLUDING CORNWALL.**

**“ THE WELL-DOCUMENTED INABILITY OF THE CHURCH, OUR POLICE, OUR LEGAL INSTITUTIONS AND NOW THE PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT TO RESPOND EFFECTIVELY TO THIS CRISIS DEMONSTRATES THAT WE ARE EITHER DEALING WITH A MASSIVE COVER-UP OR A COMPLETE BREAKDOWN IN SOCIETY’S ABILITY TO PROTECT OUR CHILDREN. EITHER WAY WE NEED ANSWERS FROM AN INDEPENDENT PUBLIC INQUIRY.”**

**For further information, please contact Alain Seguin, Coalition Coordinator: home phone (613) 931-9436 or Joanna Muckle, Media and Public Relations Coordinator (613) 834-1360**