

Bill C-63: the Online Harms Bill (The long and Winding Road)

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The current [Bill C-63](#) (the Online Harms Bill) was introduced in the federal House of Commons February 26, 2024. It is described as a ‘House Government Bill’ sponsored by the Minister of Justice, [The Honourable Arif Virani](#).

The [current text of Bill C-63](#) can be seen on the House of Commons website. Or [click here](#) for a PDF text copy.

The first Liberal government effort to deal with online harms occurred with their 2021 [Bill C-36](#).

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Action Steps – Urgent

If you have concerns about the implications of the Online Harms Bill (Bill C-63), now would be a very good time to communicate these concerns to federal politicians. You could start with these –

Prime Minister / The Right Honourable Justin Trudeau
[www.ourcommons.ca/Members/en/justin-trudeau\(58733\)#contact](http://www.ourcommons.ca/Members/en/justin-trudeau(58733)#contact)

Justice Minister / The Honourable Arif Virani
[www.ourcommons.ca/members/en/arif-virani\(88910\)](http://www.ourcommons.ca/members/en/arif-virani(88910))

Your federal Member of Parliament
www.ourcommons.ca/Members/en/search

Looking for something to say?

[Write to your MP: Fix the Online Harms Act.](#) The Canadian Constitution Foundation.

Or compose your own comments. Find good background information in the expert commentaries and general news articles noted later in this e-resource.

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The long and winding road to Bill C-63

2018

Dec 11 - Canada launches '[National Strategy on Countering Radicalization to Violence](#)'

2019

May 14: [Prime Minister Trudeau joins Canada](#) to the 'Christchurch Call to Action' to eliminate terrorist and violent extremist content online.

2021

June 9 – [Human rights organizations criticize the Liberal government](#) for failing to meet its promise to address online hate

June 23 – Government of Canada introduced [Bill C-36: An Act to amend the Criminal Code and the Canadian Human Rights Act and to make related amendments to another Act \(hate propaganda, hate crimes and hate speech\)](#)

- **June 23** - 1st Reading of Bill (Bill died on the Order Paper when Parliament was dissolved for the 2021 federal election)
- **July 29** - [Discussion guide](#)
- **July 29** - [Technical paper](#)
- **July 29** – **September 25:** [Public consultations](#) held by the Ministry of Canadian Heritage

[Protecting Canadians from Online Harms](#) – Liberal government 2021 election platform statement

2022

February 3 – The Government publishes [What We Heard](#) (a summary of submissions to the 2021 public consultations on online harms)

March 16 – Canada announces a new '[Digital Citizens Initiative](#)' aimed at funding initiatives protecting Canadians from harmful online misinformation and disinformation.

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March 30 – Government of Canada announces [expert advisory group](#) on online safety (see also its [Terms of Reference](#))

April – Public Safety Canada releases [Parliamentary Committee notes](#) on Canada’s proposed response to online harms

June 15 – Canadian Heritage Minister [announces conclusion of the expert advisory group on online safety](#) (introductory comments at the start of the Citizens’ Assembly on Democratic Expression)

June 15 – 19 – a [Citizens’ Assembly on Democratic Expression](#) met in Ottawa focusing on online harms and safety.

July – November: Canada conducted 19 [virtual and in-person roundtables](#) on key elements of proposed online hate legislation

2023

January 12 – Canadian Heritage [announces funding for projects boosting resilience](#) against online disinformation

January 31 – Ministry of Canadian Heritage reveals [the Government’s commitment to address online safety](#)

March – [Survey of Online Harms in Canada](#) is released by Toronto Metropolitan University.

2024

February 26 – Government of Canada introduces [Bill C-63](#) to create a new Online Harms Act

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Government background / commentary:

[Proposed Bill to address Online Harms.](#) Government of Canada. Last modified March 4, 2024.

[Government of Canada introduces legislation to combat harmful content online, including the sexual exploitation of children.](#) Canadian Heritage. February 26, 2024.

[The Government's commitment to address online safety.](#) Canadian Heritage. January 31, 2023.

[Backgrounder – Government of Canada announces expert advisory group on online safety.](#) Canadian Heritage. March 30, 2022.

[What We Heard – The Government's proposed approach to address harmful content online.](#) Canadian Heritage. February 3, 2022.

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Expert commentary:

[Canada's Online Harms Act is a blast from an illiberal past.](#) Daniel Dorman. Macdonald-Laurier Institute. March 20, 2024.

[What Governments Can Learn from Canada when Regulating Online Harms.](#) Andrew Sullivan. Internet Society. March 18, 2024.

[Bill C-63: The Online Harms Act.](#) Fahad Siddiqui. Norton Rose Fulbright. March 12, 2024.

[What Lessons Did Canada Learn Before Creating Its Online Harms Bill?](#) Chris Tenove and Heidi Tworek. TechPolicy Press. March 12, 2024.

[An Overview of Canada's Online Harms Act.](#) Mandy Lau. TechPolicy Press. March 12, 2024.

[An OpenMedia FAQ: Explaining Bill C-63 / The Online Harms Act.](#) Matt Hatfield. OpenMedia. March 9, 2024.

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[The Online Harms Bill – Part 1 – Why We Need Legislation.](#) Emily Laidlaw. University of Calgary / Faculty of Law. March 6, 2024.

[Canada’s digital safety balancing act.](#) Dale Smith. The National / Canadian Bar Association. March 5, 2024.

[Five key elements of Canada’s new Online Harms Act.](#) David Baldrige, et al. Schwartz Reisman Institute for Technology and Society / Univ. of Toronto. March 1, 2024.

[The worst assault on free speech in modern Canadian history.](#) John Carpay. Justice Centre for Constitutional Freedoms. March 1, 2024.

[Canada’s new Online Harms Act \(C-63\): what you need to know.](#) John Salloum, et al. OSLER. March 1, 2024.

[Justice Centre Weekly: John Carpay on the harm of the Online Harms Act.](#) Justice Centre for Constitutional Freedoms. February 29, 2024.

[Press release: CCF concerned by Online Harms Act.](#) Canadian Constitution Foundation. February 27, 2024.

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General news:

['Hate Speech' laws Are Killing Comedy.](#) Will Jones. The Daily Skeptic. March 22, 2024.

[Editorial: The Bill C-63 hallucination.](#) The Catholic Register. March 21, 2024.

[The Liberals’ online harms law is a full-frontal assault on freedom of speech.](#) Kristopher Kinsinger. The Hub. March 20, 2024.

[Canada’s flawed online harms bill and the U.K.’s misguided legislation on extremism are parts of a troubling trend.](#) Rosie DiManno. Toronto Star. March 17, 2024.

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[Canada's Online Harms Act is revealing itself to be staggeringly reckless.](#)

Andrew Coyne. The Globe and Mail. March 15, 2024.

[Liberals introduce Online Harms Bill.](#) Kyla Perry. FULCRUM / The University of Ottawa's Independent Student News Outlet. March 14, 2024.

[Poll: Canadians unsure online harms bill will make social media safer.](#)

Stephanie Taylor. CTV News. March 13, 2024.

[Virani defends Online Harms Bill after Margaret Atwood warns of 'thoughtcrime' risk.](#) Catharine Tunney. CBC News. March 12, 2024.

[Wokeism vs. Classical Liberal Truth-Based Order at the Root of Online Harms Bill Debate.](#) Brian Giesbrecht. The EPOCH Times. Updated March 12, 2024.

['Government gone overboard': Experts concerned by Ottawa's attempts to rein in hate speech.](#) Raisa Patel. Toronto Star. March 10, 2024.

[Ottawa Claims New Online Harms Bill Would Set 'High Bar' for Determining What Constitutes Hate Speech.](#) Matthew Horwood. The EPOCH Times. Updated March 6, 2024.

[Online Harms Act Is Using Child Safety as a Front to Assault Canadians' Freedoms.](#) Peter Menzies. The EPOCH Times. March 3, 2024.

[ANALYSIS: Youth Exposure to Online Hate Is Rampant, Says StatsCan, But a Closer Look Shows 'Hate' Is in Eye of Beholder.](#) Tara MacIsaac. The EPOCH Times. March 1, 2024.

[Virani says new hate crime prevention measures will come with safeguards.](#) Stephanie Taylor. Canada's National Observer. March 1, 2024.

[New Online Harms Act Gives Appointed Commissioners Too Much Power.](#) Peter Menzies. The EPOCH Times. Updated February 27, 2024.

[Any Good in Ottawa's Online Harms Bill Is Overshadowed by Its 'Hate Speech' Provisions.](#) Cory Morgan. The EPOCH Times. February 26, 2024.

[Tories Will Oppose Imminent Online Harms Bill, Says Poilievre.](#) Noe Chartier. The EPOCH Times. Updated February 21, 2024.

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[Liberals' online harms bill not about regulating speech: minister.](#) Stephanie Taylor. Global News. December 18, 2023.

[Minister Tight Lipped on Whether It's Looking at New Regulator to Fight Online Crimes.](#) Canadian Press. The EPOCH Times. December 1, 2023.

[Justice Minister Reiterates Pledge for 'Online Harms' Legislation, Offers No Timeline: Report.](#) Noe Chartier. The EPOCH Times. Updated October 18, 2023.

[Canadian Heritage funds projects to strengthen Canadians' resilience against harmful online disinformation.](#) Canadian Heritage. Newswire. January 11, 2023.

[Heritage Department restarting consultations on online harms bill.](#) Raffy Boudjikianian. CBC News. July 8, 2022.

[Real Intent of 'Online Harms' Legislation Is to Crack Down on Opinions Ottawa Considers Misinformation.](#) Peter Menzies. Updated June 15, 2022.

[Ottawa's Proposed Bills to Curtail Online Harms 'Oblivious' to Reality: Former CRTC Executives.](#) Isaac Teo. The EPOCH Times. Updated April 13, 2022.

[Government of Canada announces expert advisory group on online safety.](#) Ministry of Canadian Heritage. Newswire. March 30, 2022.

[Federal government targets "harmful" online disinformation.](#) Dominique Lemoine. IT World Canada. March 17, 2022.

[Canadian government providing support to counter disinformation.](#) Connor Gunn. Lethbridge News Now. March 16, 2022.

[Liberals to re-introduce anti-hate bill 'as soon as possible', minister says.](#) Marie Woolf. Global News. February 4, 2022.

[Government heads back to drawing board with online harm bill after negative reaction in consultations.](#) Raffy Boudjikianian. CBC News. February 3, 2022.

[Liberals' Plan to Curb 'Internet Harms' Puts Free Speech at Risk: Expert.](#) Andrew Chen. The EPOCH Times. Updated November 2, 2021.

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[Ottawa proposes new rules to crack down on harmful online content.](#) The Canadian Press. CBC News. July 29, 2021.

[Ottawa outlines new legislation to define and crack down on online hate speech.](#) Nick Boisvert. CBC News. June 23, 2021.

[After another attack targeting Muslims, critics demand promised hate legislation.](#) Peter Zimonjic, et al. CBC News. June 9, 2021.

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Online Safety Bill (United Kingdom)

[Guidance: A guide to the Online Safety Bill.](#) United Kingdom. Dept for Science, Innovation and Technology, and Dept for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport. Updated August 30, 2023.