

NEWS RELEASE



Honourable Andrew Telegdi, P.C., M.P. Kitchener-Waterloo

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PARLIAMENT VOTES IN FAVOUR OF RECOGNIZING THE ULTIMATE SACRIFICE OF OUR CANADIAN FORCES AND GOVERNMENT PERSONNEL SERVING ABROAD

OTTAWA—Andrew Telegdi, Member of Parliament for Kitchener-Waterloo, regrets the minority Conservative government's position not to honour the majority vote of Parliament to lower the flag on Parliament Hill to half-mast and to hold a moment of silence if the House is in session after the demise of a member of the Canadian Forces or Canadian Government personnel serving overseas in a peacekeeping, peacemaking or humanitarian mission. *"The question on holding a minute of silence is a call of Parliament and not the call of a minority government. The question of half-masting the flag on top of Parliament is a question that is open to debate. I call on this government to respect the will of Parliament"*, said Telegdi.

Telegdi stated that the motivation for the motion was to demonstrate unity for our troops and service people regardless of where one stood on the political front: *"While Canada's role in the world is a cause of legitimate and necessary debate, Conservative Members of Parliament could have joined in a non-partisan effort to show that all MPs are unanimous in their gratitude and admiration of our men and women serving Canada... Tonight demonstrated that we should have a consistent non-political procedure that honours the sacrifices of our Canadian Forces and Government personnel serving abroad. The flag on the Peace Tower is a symbol for all Canadians-not the government of the day."*

Telegdi further said that: *"Motion M-310 is a Private Members Motion. The actions of the government to commission a report in secret on a Private Members Motion is a gross interference in Private Members Business by this Conservative government. To not make the report available prior to the vote on the motion is also contemptuous of MPs. The secret commissioning of reports by this government also begs the question if other reports were commissioned and were kept secret because the government does not agree with its conclusions?"*

Private Members' Business is a matter of conscience and is supposed to be a free vote that is not subject to party discipline. The Conservative Government has not only politicized this issue, it has flipped flopped on their previous stance on an issue that they in fact supported while in Opposition. Mr. James Moore, M.P. for Port Moody—Westwood—Port Coquitlam enjoyed unanimous support for his motion to fly the flag at half-mast for the passing of Lieutenant Chris Saunders from the HMCS Chicoutimi on October 7, 2004.

Whether to lower the flag or not is not just an academic exercise left to the “experts”. This gesture is meant to help the grieving families and friends of our fallen soldiers at a difficult time. Ms. Colleen Myrol, the mother of Brock Myrol who was one of 4 RCMP officers shot to death in Mayerthorpe Alberta, stated in the Globe and Mail of April 2, 2008: *“When you lose your son to Canada, the flag becomes incredibly important to you.” “Whenever I see the Peace Tower with the flag at half-mast it always humbles me to remember the love and support Canadians have given us.”*

It also reminds us of the people who gave their lives while serving Canada in previous conflicts. Remembering the sacrifices of Canadians is not just something we do once a year but one that we do year round whether tragedy strikes culminating in a major day of Remembrance on November 11th.

To quote Lincoln Dinning, the Father of the late Cpl. Matthew Dinning in his touching letter to the Prime Minister: *“...there is no more important VIP than a Canadian soldier who gave his life in the service of his country.”*

Lest we forget.

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