

215 Highland Road,  
Smithers, BC  
V0J 2N6

August 24, 2011

**URGENT**

Dr Kellie Leitch, MD, MBA, FRCS (C), Order of Ontario  
Member of Parliament for Simcoe-Grey  
Ontario

Dear Dr Leitch:

You are currently supporting medical misinformation regarding asbestos that causes people overseas to die painful and unnecessary deaths. I believe this violates your medical Code of Ethics.

The policy you are endorsing claims that exposure to very high levels of chrysotile asbestos (the only form of asbestos sold in the world) of 1 fibre per cubic centimetre of air causes no harm to health. All Canada's medical authorities, including the Quebec government's medical authorities, have condemned this as dangerous misinformation that will lead to loss of life.

While other MPs may choose to support dangerous medical misinformation and to put politics ahead of human life, you, as a medical doctor, are, I believe, forbidden to do so.

I was recently awarded the Canadian Public Health Association's National Public Health Hero award precisely for "revealing the inaccuracies in the propaganda that the asbestos industry has employed for the better part of the last century to mislead citizens about the seriousness of the threat of asbestos for human health." It is very disturbing to me that you, as a medical doctor, are being complicit in this misleading propaganda put out by the asbestos industry.

In 2009, you founded the Kids Health Foundation to ensure children have the best health chances possible. Yet you are knowingly contributing to harm of children overseas by supporting a policy that places asbestos in their schools and homes, where it will deteriorate over time and release deadly fibres into the air for them to breathe.

You would not allow this to happen to Canadian children.

Some would call this racist. At the very least, it is a double standard that treats the lives of people overseas as being of lesser value.

I find it unacceptable that you refuse to answer this serious question concerning your ethics.

We do not live in a dictatorship. When elected public officials, such as yourself, refuse to answer legitimate questions on a critical issue, then we end up with zero transparency and zero accountability. The public, in a democracy, has a right to know your answer.

I have been involved in defending human rights all my life. I was the director of the BC Human Rights Commission and director of the Canadian Court Challenges Program. Human rights means holding accountable those who possess power. When there is no accountability, there are no human rights.

I ask that you break your silence. I ask that you stop supporting medical misinformation regarding asbestos.

I ask that you support the Canadian Medical Association, the World Health Organization and the more than two hundred medical experts who wrote to you, who have demanded that all use of asbestos stop.

I look forward with great hope to receiving your response.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Kathleen Ruff'. The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Kathleen Ruff  
[kruff@bulkley.net](mailto:kruff@bulkley.net)