

LETTERS

# New anti-terror laws needed to keep us safe, reader says

Combating ISIS means Canada and other nations are facing the greatest threat since the rise of the Nazis.

Yet, NDP Leader Tom Mulcair still seems oblivious, as he continues to pander to his base. He refused to support Canada sending our elite military unit to Iraq to train Kurdish fighters. He refused to admit radical Islamists, inspired by ISIS, were responsible for slaughtering Warrant Officer Patrice Vincent and Cpl. Nathan Cirillo on Canadian soil. Now he is refusing to support a new law that would give authorities the necessary tools they need to protect us.

Let's not forget CSIS and the RCMP were aware of individuals who had become radicalized, but current laws did not enable them to take preventive action, which this new law does.

Larry Comeau, Ottawa

## Harper policies caused terror

So, Prime Minister Stephen Harper wants to take away our civil liberties to protect us from our enemies the terrorist. A more practical approach would be if our government quit creating enemies for Canada by blind-



Parliament Hill shooter Michael Zehaf-Bibeau made threats before acting.

ly following the U.S. into their wars.

Since Harper was given a majority government, we have bombed two countries that did nothing to us. We are currently helping the Kurds fight ISIS. What if the Kurds turn out to be no better than the people our warplanes are bombing for them? And now, Canadians who oppose the bombings are being spied on as terrorist-loving radicals.

Andre Mollon, Langford

## No, no, no, no, no and no!

Until TransLink is disbanded, I will vote No, as will all the people I have spoken with.

The millions upon millions that TransLink wastes borders on criminal.

Here's hoping for a No-vote victory.

Warren Brozer, Surrey

## Glass-fed baby case is vile

I feel absolute outrage for the woman and her partner who fed two babies shredded glass, so that they could sue the baby-food manufacturer.

And now to learn that the judge sentenced the mother to just 18 months in jail, which translates into 12 months of incarceration, for such a barbaric act certainly shows that our laws are very lax.

These actions present the same images as the terrorist ISIS group beheading their prisoners and showing them on the Internet.

The actions of this couple are just as repugnant as ISIS and the sentencing should reflect our society's vile disgust.

Paul Moffatt, Richmond

## Middle-aged fool isn't news

Re: Mayor (Gregor Robertson) thanks his girlfriend.

Who wants to read about a middle-aged man, going through mid-life crisis, making a fool of himself?

This article leaves me not wanting more.

Gwena Schuck, Vancouver

## Let's welcome more addicts

After reading the letter to the editor by Tony Ackland, I don't know why neighbours on the North Shore are making such a fuss over a planned recovery house in their area.

According to Ackland, these guys "are pretty serious about getting sober," they will "address their defects of character" and "be encouraged to do service work."

Ackland concludes by informing us that we "might be pleasantly surprised that they will be very good neighbours."

With such a glowing account on the virtues of substance-abuse addicts, I am surprised that the government doesn't build more recovery houses.

John Clench, Vancouver

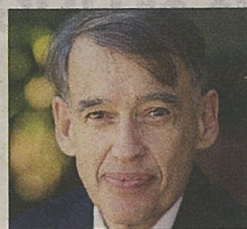
# B.C. Liberal tax policies favour the rich over the poor

Government policies are normally designed to help citizens as they try to move up the economic ladder, not penalize them for trying. On that count alone, this week's budget from B.C. Finance Minister Mike de Jong is an abject failure.

In its budget highlights, the B.C. government presented four scenarios to bolster its case that "British Columbians continue to have one of the lowest overall tax burdens in Canada." But buried deep in another budget document, Page 106 of the three-year fiscal plan, are two other scenarios and, strangely, B.C. doesn't fare quite as well when they're pulled out for comparison.

Accepting the government's numbers at face value, a single individual earning \$80,000 in B.C. would have the lowest tax burden in Canada. Yet, a single individual earning \$25,000 has the third-lowest burden.

A two-income family of four earning \$90,000 has the second-lowest burden, but the same family earning \$30,000 has the fourth lowest.



Dermod Travis

OPINION

Notice a pattern? The wealthier you are in B.C., the lower the comparative tax burden compared with other provinces.

Undoubtedly it's a coincidence, but surely no government would ever stoop so low as to design fiscal scenarios that were the most favourable for their political spin, such as setting income levels marginally below where the full impact of MSP premiums might kick in, which would likely throw some of those favourable inter-provincial comparisons out the window. It's why what other provinces have

to say about inter-provincial tax burdens is so fascinating. According to the Saskatchewan government's inter-city comparison, a family living in Vancouver, earning \$50,000 annually in 2014, had the highest tax burden of the 10 cities included in their analysis, including property tax. A family earning \$75,000 was a little better off at fifth highest.

Numbers compiled by the Manitoba government don't back up B.C. either. A single parent with one child, earning \$30,000, would have a lower tax burden in seven other provinces than they do in B.C. A two-income household of four, earning \$60,000, would have a lower tax burden in Newfoundland and Labrador, Ontario, Manitoba, Saskatchewan and Alberta.

But what's really killing off the economic hopes of most British Columbians is the incessant nickel-and-diming by a government that lacks the political will to set personal income-tax rates at a level where the tax burden is shared fairly among all British Columbians.

Whether it's a B.C. Hydro rate increase, an ICBC premium hike or a rise in MSP premiums, they're all just another way for the B.C. government to pick the pockets of taxpayers. And since income rarely factors into the equation with regressive taxation, it's generally those who can least afford the hit that get hurt the most.

According to an analysis by PBI Actuarial Consultants, MSP premiums for a family of three or more have gone up by 33 per cent since 2009, while per-capita health-care costs increased by 15 per cent.

PBI notes that since "all families with an adjusted net household income over \$30,000 pay the same flat MSP rate, the lower the income above \$30,000, the higher the impact of the premiums increase will be."

They calculate that a family of three or more with an income just over the \$30,000 limit for premium assistance will have to pay \$1,728 per year, or over five per cent of their annual income, while families with a net household income between

\$50,000 and \$99,999 will see the percentage of their family income going to pay premiums progressively fall from 3.5 per cent to 1.7 per cent.

And since premium-assistance levels aren't indexed to the cost of living, every pay raise for someone on premium assistance risks putting them a little further behind the eight ball, as that assistance begins to cut out. The last time the limit for MSP assistance was changed was in 2010, when it was raised from \$28,000.

By 2017-18, the B.C. government forecasts that MSP premiums will bring in \$2.67 billion or \$1.06 billion more than they did in 2009-10. The revenue it generates will be \$18 million shy of what the government forecasts its royalties will be from natural gas, forestry and mining combined. It would seem the B.C. government has found its own prosperity fund in MSP premiums.

Dermod Travis is the executive director of Integrity B.C.