

"Rise in the presence of the aged, and honour the face of the old man. . ."
Leviticus 19:32

Elder Advocates of Alberta Society (1992)

July 25, 2015

HAND DELIVERED

The Honourable Mr. Brian Mason, Minister of Transportation,
324 Legislature Building
10800 97 Avenue, Edmonton, AB, Canada T5K 2B6

Dear Mr. Minister:

Reference

MEETING, RE: MASS MONITORING OF ALBERTA'S SENIOR DRIVERS.

In 2002, without justification, the Honourable Ed. Stelmach, Minister of Transportation, the Executive Committee under the watch of the Honourable Premier Klein changed the *Operator Licensing and Vehicle Control Regulation of the Alberta Traffic Safety Act*, Alberta Regulation 320/2002, Section 16(2). The change required that persons at age seventy-five and thereafter provide a proof of medical examination prior to their license renewal. Thus began the mass monitoring of Alberta's senior drivers.

This legislative change was surreptitiously introduced, no fan fare, no press releases, not all MLA's were informed, not even all government MLA's were informed. It was not noted in Hansard,

The protocol, introduced to Physician's Offices by the Primary Care Network, was known as the **Simard MD & DriveABLE pilot project**. This sophisticated, financial elder abuse has been promoted under the guise of research, science and safety.

We would add that the same government who introduced the *Traffic Act* change, paved the way with Human Rights Legislation introduced by the Honorable Ron Ghitter of Calgary in 1972. The legislation excluded "age" in Sections # 4 & # 5. Thus the blatant discrimination of seniors cannot be challenged under Human Rights legislation.

The collateral damage has been unconscionable. It has been reported that in 2014, over 8,000 Albertans lost their right to drive.

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We allege that physicians were clamoring for a raise. The Honourable Mr. Klein and his executive committee, Ed Stelmach, Transportation Minister, creatively conceived the idea of the mass monitoring of seniors. The concept was made to effectively give a raise to physicians, a raise given on the backs of seniors. There is no other reason, why would you have this mass testing of older drivers who pose no danger to road safety? We were betrayed by our own government, by our own elected MLA's.

COST TO TAXPAYERS

A physician may bill Alberta Health Services, well in excess of \$200.00. for each senior tested. Up to \$160.00 for medical assessment, \$75,00 for Simard MD and perhaps a bounty of \$36.00. We are told that very often the *Medical* consists of little more than a blood pressure check.

BOUNTY ON SENIOR DRIVERS

Dr. Donald Redelmeier, Institute for Clinical Evaluative Science, published, that since 2006, Ontario has been paying doctors \$36.25 for each patient referred to the Transportation Ministry who may be unfit to drive. Is there such a bounty on senior drivers in Alberta?

OLDER DRIVERS ARE DOCUMENTED TO BE SAFEST DRIVERS ON ROAD

Anne McCartt, the *United States Insurance Institute for Highway Safety* senior vice president and co-author of the study has commented, "This should help ease fears that aging baby boomers are a safety threat".

SIMARD MD & DRIVEABLE PILOT PROJECT

It has been widely published that the Simard MD cognitive test was developed by Bonnie Dobbs PhD and Donald Schopflocher PhD, of the Medically At-Risk Driver Centre. (MARD).

In lectures and public presentations, Bonnie Dobbs presents the Simard MD as a

product of their research. She refers to the Simard MD as the “**screening tool that we have developed**”.

She informs listeners that the test is “**based on eight years of research**”.

At no time, during local presentations, has Bonnie Dobbs told listeners that the Simard MD was not developed by her and her fellow PhD but is essentially Der DemTect test.

Der DemTect was developed in year 2000, by Dr. Pasquale Calabrese, Joseph Kessler & Elke Kalbe in Bochum, Germany. On the MARD website the SIMARD MD is cited as a “*modification of the DemTect because it uses a subset of the items from that screening tool*”

Indeed. We submit that the Simard MD is hardly a *subset*. The Simard MD is in fact the DemTect test minus question 4, renamed Simard MD and touted as “**a new screening tool**”.

Furthermore, Bonnie Dobbs has widely published- refers to the Simard MD as a “**research based tool**”, **the reason we developed it.**”

When challenged concerning the danger of the test, she responds,

“A cognitively intact persons of any age, will do well on the Simard MD”

This is false. This is the false premise that is the cornerstone of the Simard MD and DriveABLE pilot project.

The threat of losing ones right to drive, is one of the greatest issues confronting older Albertans.

Older Albertans fear having to undergo license renewal. We receive fear filled calls from across the province, even before they make the appointment with their doctor for license renewal. We submit that seniors have good reason to be fearful.

Mr. Minister, we would be grateful to meet with you in regard to these matters. We would be also most grateful if the Honourable Premier Ms. Rachel Notley and Ms. Lori Sigurdson MLA would be in attendance.

We shall provide a detailed agenda if so requested.

Please allow us to be in receipt of your response concerning this matter, by the 4th of August 2015.

Thank you.

Yours truly,

Elder Advocates of Alberta Society,

Per:

Ruth Maria Adria RN Ret.

c.c The Honourable Premier, Mrs. Rachel Notley
 Ms. Lori Sigurdson MLA
 The Honourable Minister of Seniors, Ms. Sarah Hoffman