



# american political science association

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December 2, 2008

Dr. James R. Stoner Jr.  
Louisiana State University  
Political Science  
240 Stubbs Hall  
Baton Rouge LA 70803-5433

Dear Dr. Stoner:

I am writing on behalf of the APSA Council to respond to your petition of late August and the follow-up information that you supplied in September. Your petition concerns the protection of academic freedom and free speech at the 2009 meetings in Toronto, citing the performance of Canada's Human Rights Commissions and allegations at the Canadian Political Science Association.

In following up your inquiries, we have heard from the Canadian Association of University Teachers (CAUT) and from the Canadian Federation for the Humanities and Social Sciences, who have affirmed that academic freedom is protected in Canada. We have assembled background information on freedom of expression and academic freedom in Canada, including the place of the HRC's in addressing hate speech. We have examined the actions that you refer to in your messages by the Human Rights Commissions (HRC's) pertaining to hate speech, learning they have not been sustained in courts. The Canadian Political Science Association informs us that no censure actions have been called for or are considered by the Association, contrary to Professor Ajzenstat's remark. I see that she has posted a statement correcting her report of that situation.

After reviewing this information and consulting with scholarly partners in Canada, we have concluded that reconsideration of the meeting site is unwarranted and that the situation does not call for further investigation by APSA.

We will share with APSA members the materials we have gathered. APSA will post descriptive information about freedom of expression in Canada and about Canada's Human Rights Commissions on our web site. The site will link to basic background materials and authorizing documents about the HRC's. We will also post on the APSA web site your original petition and follow up, and a copy of our communication from the CAUT.

Also, consistent with the APSA policy to engage intellectually with issues that emerge related to siting, the 2009 Annual Meeting Program Chairs have elected to have panels at the APSA meeting in Toronto on the role of HRC's, and perhaps to have a "Great Debate" session about First Amendment rights versus hate speech legislation or some similar topic.

We will have the web materials available online for members shortly and will direct members' attention to them. Thank you for concern for APSA and its members.

Sincerely,  
/s/

Peter J. Katzenstein  
President

Cc: Dr. Bradley C.S. Watson

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