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Freedom On Trial

By Dale Jodoin
 Columnist

There is a new kind of tension in Canada right now. Not the loud kind that blows up in a comment section. The quiet kind that sits in your gut when you read the next federal bill and think, wait, can they really do that?

People are worn down. Prices are up. Trust is thin. When trust is thin, government power feels heavier. You hear it in plain talk from people who never cared about politics. They are saying, I keep my head down now. I do not post that stuff anymore. I do not want to be the one they make an example of.

That last line is the warning. Behaviour is changing.

The bill lighting up phones and church meetings is Bill C 9, the Combating Hate Act, introduced in September 2025. Ottawa says it targets hate, intimidation, and harassment, and protects access to places like churches, synagogues, mosques, temples, and community centres. Most Canadians agree nobody should be threatened while walking into a house of worship.

The fight is about what else gets pulled in, and what becomes criminal when definitions get stretched.

Bill C 9 proposes changes to hate propaganda and hate crime rules in the Criminal Code. The part that has faith communities on edge is tied to removing a long standing defence that protects good faith discussion of religious subjects. In simple terms, that defence has been a legal shield for religious teaching and debate, even when a topic is sensitive, even when the message is unpopular.

That matters because religion is not only comfort. A lot of it is moral claims. Right and wrong. Sin and forgiveness. Marriage. Family. Human nature. Those topics will always offend someone. In a free country, offence is not supposed to equal crime.

When the legal line gets blurry, people stop talking. Not because they plan harm. Because they do not trust how the line will be drawn later, who can file a complaint, or what happens when a sermon clip goes online.

And in 2026 everything goes online.

A phone in the back pew. A short clip. A caption added by someone else. A few angry comments. Then the pile on. Context disappears. Tone disappears. Even a quote can be treated like a personal attack.

Some people say, if you are not doing anything wrong, you have nothing to fear. That is not how modern life works. Words are messy. Sarcasm gets read as threat. A hard opinion gets labelled harmful. A quote gets treated like intent.

Here is the fear Canadians are talking about. A country can slide into punishing speech, not only violence. The fear is not only a fine. It is a police file. A court date. A lawyer bill. A criminal label. A job that suddenly goes cold when your name gets searched.

And yes, people talk about jail.

It sounds extreme until you look at other countries that already charge people over online speech. Canadians keep bringing up England because it shows how "we are targeting harm" can become "we are prosecuting messages." In the UK, some offences cover online messages judged grossly offensive, and convictions can bring penalties, including jail time. That is why Canadians ask, are we heading the same way?

Bill C 9 also lands in a country where online harms proposals keep returning. Ottawa and regulators have been pushing for stronger rules that pressure platforms to reduce exposure to certain content. The goals sound fine. Protect kids. Stop threats.

But the mechanics matter more than the slogans.

If platforms face legal duties and penalties, they protect themselves first. The safest move is to delete fast and wide. More removals. More automated filters. Less tolerance for blunt debate. Less patience for context.

That is how lawful speech gets squeezed without a judge. Private companies become the gatekeepers because they do not want trouble. Even if you never get charged, you can still get shut down. Your post disappears. Your reach drops. You get a warning that explains nothing. Then you stop posting, because it is not worth the headache.

Now add the specific worry for churches. If legal protections around good faith religious discussion are narrowed, it is not hard to picture more complaints aimed at sermons, Bible verses, flyers, youth talks, even a pastor answering a question after service. The fear is not that pastors want to harm anyone. The fear is that a broad law plus a complaint driven culture equals trouble.

A lot of Canadians already watch their words at work. Now they fear they will have to watch their words at church too. Once a church starts preaching like it is scared, something has changed.

Ottawa will say these bills target hate, not honest debate. But laws do not live in press conferences. They live in definitions and enforcement. They live in how police, prosecutors, regulators, and platforms interpret them over time. They live in what gets labelled hate, and who gets to decide.

Here is a basic test any reader can use.

Do these laws focus tightly on direct threats and real violence, with clear language that protects lawful speech? Or do they drift into punishing ideas, moral claims, and unpopular opinions?

Once the state starts managing ideas, it rarely stops at the first target. Language broadens. Enforcement gets uneven. The safest move for ordinary people becomes silence.

If Ottawa wants trust, the answer is not vague speech law. The answer is tight language, clear limits, and strong protection for lawful expression, including religious expression, even when it offends someone.

If you care about free speech, do not sleepwalk through this. Read what Bill C 9 changes. Watch whether Parliament removes the good faith religious defence. Ask your MP one direct question. Can Canadians speak honestly about religion, morality, and politics without fearing a police file, or worse?

Because once fear becomes normal, freedom shrinks quietly, and you notice it only after your voice is already gone.



When Employers See Your Value, Job Market Disconnects Disappear

By Nick Kossov

When it comes to my The Art of Finding Work columns, none of what I write is theoretical for me. It took me about 20 years into my career to grasp the importance employers place on value-add. Before this realization, I intellectualized my experience, which was of no value to an employer.

I believe two main factors significantly contribute to why job seekers struggle in a job market that, although highly competitive, is still hiring, though not as easily or quickly as they feel entitled to.

1. Having grown up overprotected and overindulged, with parents and teachers constantly telling them, "everyone wins," many job seekers never had to fight for anything and therefore aren't mentally prepared to compete for a job.
2. Intellectualizing their experience.

Many job seekers hold the naive belief that their "experience" and "credentials" should be enough to get them hired; in their minds, they don't have to prove how they contributed to their former employers' profitability. Ultimately, much of the disconnect between job seekers and employers stems from job seekers failing to articulate how they'll contribute to an employer's bottom line—not framing their value.

When job searching, your worth needs permission. You don't decide your worth; employers do, which they determine based on how they perceive what your value or potential value to their business is. Your worth to an employer isn't a given, nor is it a matter of self-opinion. Proving your worth is your responsibility.

An employer assessing a candidate's worth is no different from making a large purchase or investment. If an employer sees value, which, as I mentioned and is worth repeating, is the job-seeker's responsibility to demonstrate, in hiring a candidate (an ongoing expense), such as they'll generate revenue, save money, or remove risks, they're more likely to hire that candidate, provided they feel the candidate will mesh with their company culture, the team they'll be working with, and will be manageable.

Understandably, employers look to hire low-risk candidates, defined by:

- Having a track record of delivering measurable outcomes.
 - Coming across as someone who won't be a disruptor (you'll make things easier, not harder).
- Employers aren't interested in your experience per se; they're interested in the value you added to your previous employer's profitability, which you ideally will add to their business. Approaching your job search with "Here's what I do" triggers the question, "So what?"
- "I'm fluent in Tagalog." · "I'm proficient in Excel."
 - "I managed a help desk." · "I'm creative."
 - "Results-driven leader with a proven track record."

Due to their intangibility, employers no longer take self-promotion statements, which are usually grandiose, or opinions about oneself, seriously. I've lost count of how many candidates talk a good game about themselves, but upon further due diligence (an assessment test, completing an assignment, asking 'Tell me a time when' questions), it became clear that talking a good game was their primary skill.

Recruiters and hiring managers scan resumes and LinkedIn profiles for numbers and context, not soft skills or empty phrases. Results outweigh opinions. Employers are only interested in hiring candidates who can deliver results. When was the last time you made a purchase—remember, hiring is equivalent to making a purchase—without considering the expected result(s)?

- In 2025, secured \$1.5M in new business contracts by targeting businesses that serve Toronto's Filipino community.
- Created a custom automated Excel template that cuts the time to generate weekly sales analysis reports by 80%.
- Implemented Zendesk AI Agents, reducing IT support's average daily call volume from 850 to 680, a 20% decrease.
- Launched Wayne Enterprise's new anti-frizz shampoo by producing and posting 20 engaging 30-second videos on its social media channels, resulting in a 28% increase in conversion rate over the previous launch, a colour-enhancing shampoo.
- Managed a \$10M annual capital expenditure budget spanning 4 divisions. Achieved 15% savings in 2025 through vendor renegotiations.

Shifting from "What do I want to say about myself?" to "What evidence can I provide that I'm the solution to this employer's problems?" will create "connects" between you and employers rather than disconnects. Reflect on how your skills have led to measurable outcomes.

The candidates who are getting hired aren't the ones who are shouting the loudest or checking off all the proverbial boxes. The candidates employers are having conversations with are those they believe can effectively solve the problems the role is meant to address.

For an employer to view you as a solution worth paying for, they need to see evidence that you have solved problems for your previous employers. Position yourself around the employer's problems and needs—What employer wouldn't want to increase their profitability?—not your resume.

Every day, job seekers tell me or post on LinkedIn, complaining about how employers hire, as if that's a smart job-search strategy (it isn't), that they have years of experience and expertise, yet their applications go unnoticed. No acknowledgments. No conversations. It's their ego talking. Job seekers expecting employers to merely value their "experience" and "expertise" without providing evidence of how they impacted their previous employer's bottom line are the ones creating much of the disconnect between job seekers and employers, and then ironically complain about "the disconnect."

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Sunday March 22/26

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