

## Agreeing with Ezra Levant?

by Stephen Elliott-Buckley - Sunday, August 28, 2011

<http://politicsrespun.org/2011/08/agreeing-with-ezra-levant/>

I happen to agree with Ezra Levant today. Only in part.

Here's a piece on Quebec's desire to license journalists.

The government of Quebec wants to licence journalists.

Christine St-Pierre, its minister of culture and communications, thinks it just ain't right there aren't controls over people like me. Or, more to the point, people like you — mere citizens who aren't "official."

She thinks journalism should be left to the "professionals."

via [Corrupting journalists](#) | [Columnists](#) | [Opinion](#) | [Calgary Sun](#)

I completely agree with the view that the government has no place in defining who "gets" to be a journalist, or have better access to government sources:

The rest of us are merely, quote "amateur." And, as a reward for being government approved, these hand-picked journalists would get "better access to government sources."

Of course they would. Because they would really become government journalists in the first place. And government journalists go to the government to be told what to say.

But as well as his Bill 101 rant, I don't agree with this last part, that "government journalists go to the government to be told what to say" since we've seen so well for decades that mainstream corporate media are all too happy to parrot government press releases without needing to actually dip into journalism. So we don't need government licensed journalists for that kind of compromise.

Also, I seem to remember in recent years a controversy erupted when BC's speaker of the legislature denied press credentials to someone, a blogger, I think. At the heart of the issue was the speaker's office's evaluation of that person as a journalist, or whatever. [If you have a link to that story, please add it in the comments. I can't find it.]

This kind of intrusion, though quite commonplace in other forms in Canada, is not acceptable.

St-Pierre's plans come from a Soviet-style report commissioned by the Quebec government last winter, written by Dominique Payette, who said the government needed to "ensure" the "supply

of information and the conditions of practicing professional journalism do not deteriorate further.” Not surprisingly, her proposals are also biased against English-speaking journalists.

No, that's not surprising. What is also not surprising, but also unacceptable, are contemptuous information access practices by Harper's crew: no questions after press conferences, virtually no press availability, candidates skipping all-candidates meetings and debates.

Of course, Payette and St-Pierre are wrong. The Internet and so-called amateurs have immensely improved journalism.

They've made it freer and more democratic, and have turned everyone with a cellphone camera, everyone with a Facebook page, into a possible news gatherer and a commentator — and a fact-checker and a critic. Maybe it's that last part government hates so much.

True. It's too bad Levant doesn't use his influence with the Conservative Party of Canada to argue for more open communication from them.

I love amateur journalists. I am one, myself. I thank my lucky stars I never went to a journalism school — where the chief thing they teach is left-wing ideology.

But I'll depart from jumping on this right wing bandwagon. And I'll also choose to not agree with his characterization of the CBC being responsible for totalitarian views like he's explored. That's just tired.