

BCCLA ANNUAL

OUR RIGHTS ARE
INTERCONNECTED

YOUTH CONFERENCE 2026



Thursday, April 30, 2026

9:00 AM – 3:00 PM

Vancouver Community College

(250 West Pender)

Thank you to our workshop presenters and sponsors, who we proudly work in solidarity with to protect civil liberties and human rights.



BCCLA gratefully acknowledges our partners for their financial assistance, without which we would not be able to host this event.



ABOUT BCCLA

The BC Civil Liberties Association (BCCLA) has been protecting civil liberties and human rights in Canada since 1962.

We do this by fighting for change at a systemic level.

Our work includes strategic litigation, policy-based law reform, and public legal education — like this Youth Conference today.

We tackle a wide range of issues at the heart of civil liberties and human rights in Canada.

Some of the issues we take on include:

- Criminal Law Reform
- Fundamental Freedoms
- Housing Rights
- Indigenous Rights
- National Security
- Policing & Police Accountability
- Prisoners' Rights
- Privacy & Surveillance

A Message From BCCLA's Executive Director

Welcome to BCCLA's 21st Annual Youth Conference! Each year we're thrilled to meet students who share our passion for protecting and expanding rights and freedoms in Canada.

We're inspired by your creativity, enthusiasm, and insightful perspectives on the world around us. It's an honour to host this exciting event with a rich history of shaping future leaders.

Today I invite you to challenge yourselves, participate courageously, practice inclusion and open-mindedness, and think critically.

You'll have the opportunity to engage with pressing social issues, meet new people, and learn from experts who are working to build a fairer and more just world.

We know that youth are a powerful force for social change. We're proud to share skills, knowledge, and tangible tools to help you protect rights and freedoms for generations to come. When you stand for rights and freedoms, BCCLA stands with you.

L. Hughes

– Liza Hughes



ABOUT THE YOUTH CONFERENCE



BCCLA's Annual Youth Conference brings together high school students from across Vancouver and the Lower Mainland to engage with real civil liberties and human rights issues impacting people in Canada today. Civil liberties and human rights are under attack. So, how do we fight back and protect them? We look out for each other.

At the end of this conference, we hope you'll feel equipped with the skills and knowledge to defend and protect your own rights. What's great is that every time you do, you also strengthen everyone else's — **all of our rights are interconnected**. The impacts of fast fashion and climate catastrophe are deeply connected to the struggle of labour rights; housing rights are connected to gender equity; and pushing for better regulation of AI and social media platforms helps build a safer online world for everyone.

Throughout the day, you'll learn about issues affecting your community, develop a deeper understanding of your rights, and gain valuable tools as you fight for social justice, civil liberties, and human rights.

BCCLA is hosting 8 workshops this year. You can choose 2 of these workshops to attend. Each workshop is limited to 30 students.

BEHAVIOUR GUIDELINES

We ask students to treat everyone with kindness, empathy, and respect, regardless of differences in opinions, backgrounds, or identities. BCCLA values an inclusive atmosphere where everyone feels welcome.

We also ask that students leave the venue spaces clean after use, taking any garbage and throwing it in venue bins.

ACCESSIBILITY

Please contact info@bccla.org (or come to the Registration Desk on the day of the conference) so we can help meet any accessibility needs that would enable you to attend and participate in this conference. American Sign Language (ASL) interpretation will be available by request for all sessions.

We hope to provide a space that allows everyone to feel comfortable and safe.

CONFERENCE SCHEDULE

9:00 AM – 10:00 AM

REGISTRATION AND TABLING

10:00 AM – 10:45 AM

**WELCOME,
LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT AND
KEY NOTE SPEAKERS**

..... 15 MINUTE BREAK

11:00 AM – 12:30 PM

WORKSHOPS | ROUND 1

..... 1 HOUR LUNCH BREAK

1:30 PM – 3:00 PM

WORKSHOPS | ROUND 2

KEYNOTE SPEAKERS

JASON & JERRY SONG
10:00 – 10:45 AM
ROOM 420

Jason and Jerry Song are twin co-hosts of *TwinTalk Politics*, a non-partisan podcast that aims to empower youth civic engagement, and features conversations with Canadian politicians across provinces and parties, as well as democracy scholars.

Jason and Jerry are also co-leads of the Vote16 BC campaign, where they advocate for extending the voting age to 16.

Their advocacy to extend the voting age to 16 spans all three levels of government: municipal, provincial, and federal (including a current campaign at the Senate).

They have been named on both the Vancouver Power 50 and BC 30 Under 30 lists.

"Even though we can't be there in person, we're so excited to have the chance to speak with you all today and are honoured to be a part of BCCLA's 21st Annual Youth Conference."

Learn how to get involved at:
twintalkpolitics.com



THE BIGGEST THREAT TO YOUR CIVIL LIBERTIES

What the heck is the notwithstanding clause?

In Canada, we have rights and freedoms that are so important, it can be easy to take them for granted — like the right to speak your mind and express yourself, the right to a fair trial, or the right to be treated equally. Rights like these are there to prevent the police from randomly putting you in prison and keeping you there forever, or being discriminated against at school or work, or having your privacy violated.

In the past few years, these rights and freedoms have been under a new kind

of attack by those in power. Provincial governments are passing laws that they know violate our rights and freedoms, and they're using a sneaky bit of our Constitution to do it. **They think they can get away with it, but you have the power to show them they can't.**

In this workshop, you'll learn more about the rights and freedoms we have and are fighting to protect, how politicians are attacking them, and what you can do to stop it.

Vibert Jack joined BCCLA as Litigation Director in 2022. He completed an undergraduate degree in engineering at the University of British Columbia (UBC) and following that worked briefly in the mining industry. Vibert decided to change paths to find a career that better aligned with his core values. He returned to UBC, this time to study law. Before moving on to BCCLA, Vibert joined Prisoners' Legal Services, where he worked tirelessly to defend the civil liberties and human rights of incarcerated people. Vibert is committed to confronting injustice at every opportunity.



VIBERT JACK



JEROME IGBOKWE

Jerome joined BCCLA as an articling student in November 2024. Born and raised in Nigeria, he became an uninvited settler on the unceded and ancestral lands of the x^wməθk^wəy̓əm, Sḵw̓xwú7mesh, and səlilwətał peoples in 2022. Before joining BCCLA, Jerome worked as a Privacy Officer at a healthcare research facility in Vancouver. He is licensed to practice law in Nigeria and has diverse experience advising organizations on commercial transactions and civil rights advocacy. Outside of his professional work, Jerome enjoys sports, particularly football, and volunteers at his church with the Knights of Columbus.

WORKSHOP #2

KNOW YOUR RIGHTS:

Human Rights, Civil Liberties, Police Interactions and Privacy

Join us for an interactive, *Jeopardy!*-inspired, Know Your Rights quiz game!

Whether you're at school, riding the SkyTrain, or hanging out at the mall, you may encounter police or security guards.

These situations may feel intimidating or scary, but with your constitutionally-protected rights, you have the power to set clear boundaries.

This workshop will draw on Canada's *Charter of Rights and Freedoms* and information from BCCLA resources: the Arrest Handbook, Police in Schools Pocketbook, and Digital Privacy Rights for Youth Guide (all available for free on our website!).

Veronica joined BCCLA in 2019. She was born and raised in Brantford, Ontario. She comes from a strong line of Kanyen'keha:ka (Mohawk) women and is a member of the Six Nations of the Grand River. She is also of Lithuanian, German, and British ancestry.



Prior to becoming a lawyer, she spent almost a decade working on the frontlines as a victims' rights advocate, court support worker, and courtroom clerk. Veronica is passionate about human rights, human responsibility, and challenging colonial ideology as it pertains to law and justice and to create space for Indigenous ways of knowing and being.

Nasra was raised and currently lives on the stolen lands of Vancouver — also known as the unceded traditional territories of the x^wməθk^wəyəm (Musqueam), Sḵwəwú7mesh (Squamish), and səlilwətał (Tsleil-Waututh) Nations — and is deeply committed to building equitable and inclusive communities across BC.



She holds an undergraduate degree in Communications and Media, as well as a Master of Laws (LLM) in International Human Rights Law. Nasra led and

supported projects focused on immigrant inclusion, youth empowerment, and trauma-informed approaches to community building. She believes deeply in the power of collaboration and relationships to foster meaningful, lasting change.

FAST FASHION:

Social, Economic, and Environmental Impacts

The fashion industry is responsible for around two to eight percent of global greenhouse gas emissions — with fast fashion brands driving the majority.

Fast fashion is based on a model of cheap production with quick turnaround time that's often advertised to consumers as an easy way to stay on top of trends. Underneath this behemoth of an industry is cheap labour, low-quality fabric, and devastating environmental impacts, most of which is experienced by people in the Global South.

In this workshop, we'll explore the social, economic, and environmental impacts of fast fashion, starting with understanding the industry as our clothes move through the sprawling supply chain before arriving in the store.

The materials, workers, consumer experience, and financial incentives of fast consumption will all be analyzed.

So, what's the solution to fast fashion? Circular fashion? Thrifting? Using renewable energy? Paying workers more? Who can make these changes happen? And how might we tackle the fashion industry's enormous impact on people and the planet?

Erdene Batz (she/her) is a corporate campaigner, strategist, and community organizer based on the unceded and traditional lands of the x^wməθk^wəyəm (Musqueam), S^kwxwú7mesh (Squamish), and səilwətał (Tsleil-Waututh) Nations.

She started as a community organizer working on gender-based violence before moving into climate. Her work on climate has encompassed forest conservation, corporate accountability, fashion supply chain, and fossil fuel energy impacts on community and the environment.

Erdene is currently the corporate campaigner at Canopy Planet.



ERDENE BATZ

WORKSHOP #4

KNOW YOUR RIGHTS: HOUSING

Are you renting? Will you be renting soon? Unsure about your rights? Wondering if what your landlord is doing is legal?

This workshop is produced by the Tenant Resource & Advocacy Centre (TRAC).

In this workshop, you'll learn about the basics of tenant-landlord law in BC under the provincial Residential Tenancy Act (RTA).

You'll find out what types of tenancies are protected (and not protected) under the law, who's responsible for repairs and maintenance, what a tenant's right to quiet enjoyment looks like, the rules for rent increases, security deposits and evictions, and how to resolve disputes through the Residential Tenancy Branch (RTB).

Sepideh Khazei (she/her) joined TRAC as a staff lawyer in January 2025 and has worked in housing advocacy since 2022.

She was called to the bar in BC in 2022 and has appeared at the Residential Tenancy Branch (RTB) and all levels of court in BC. She assists tenants across BC with all tenancy matters and is passionate about helping low-income tenants with issues affecting their housing security.

Outside of work, Sepideh likes to spend time in nature and with her family, friends, and cat.



KNOW YOUR RIGHTS: LABOUR

Do you feel powerless at work? Do you have questions about what your boss can and can't do?

In this workshop, we'll go over basic employment rights under the Employment Standards Act. We'll explore common workplace issues and the limitations of the system to protect your rights at work. And we'll discuss how collective action can make a difference and what it means to form a union at work.

This workshop is produced by the BC General Employees Union (BCGEU).

BCGEU is a funding partner of BCCLA's Annual Youth Conference.

Austin Miller began his career working for the BC Liquor Distribution Branch, which is unionized by the BC General Employees Union (BCGEU). In 2022 he was elected to the Local Executive as a member-at-large, shop steward, and Occupational Health and Safety Rep. Recently, he was elected to the BCGEU Provincial Executive Workers with Disabilities Committee and the Provincial Executive Young Workers Committee. He was also a Picket Captain for the BCGEU Strike in September last year. Austin enjoys educating workers on the benefits of unions and how they've helped change all our lives.



AUSTIN MILLER



AUSTIN OVERTON

Austin Overton has been an employee for the BC Liquor Distribution Branch since 2022, a steward for the BC General Employees Union (BCGEU) since 2023, and a sitting member of the BCGEU Local 503 Executive Committee since 2024. Austin has represented many BCGEU members on a wide range of issues. He's also worked under BCGEU Organizing for the *Get Out To Vote* Campaign, the Worksite Contact Program, and served as a Picket Captain during the Fund the Frontlines strike in 2025.

WORKSHOP #6

SANCTUARY SCHOOLS:

Migrant Rights & Access to Education

Communities around the world have organized and fought for the right to education.

In BC, all children, regardless of their immigration status, should have access to education without fear that their information will be shared with immigration authorities.

Some school districts in BC have passed Sanctuary Schools policies that recognize this right, but many continue to exclude children and youth based on immigration status.

This interactive workshop will help build empathy and raise awareness about some of the issues faced by people who have precarious immigration status.

You can hope to leave the workshop with an understanding of:

- Different journeys of migration to Canada
- The *School Act*, the Right to Education and Sanctuary Schools principles
- Experiences families go through trying to register in BC school districts
- What you can do to advocate for Sanctuary Schools in your district

This workshop is produced by Sanctuary Health.

Ingrid Mendez and Omar Chu are members of Sanctuary Health, a grassroots community group.

We deploy direct action, movement-building, community engagement, and direct support strategies to advocate for access to publicly-funded services for all regardless of immigration status or documentation.



OMAR CHU

We fight for immigration status for all. No one should be excluded from rights, protections, or services because of their status.

We are committed to building cross-sectorial alliances of mutual support to advance the migrant justice movement on unceded Coast Salish territories.



INGRID MENDEZ

AI DEEPFAKES:

Feel Empowered & Protect Yourself Online

This workshop will help you to understand the rapidly evolving world of AI deepfakes while building your awareness, safety, and empowerment. You'll learn what deepfakes are, how this technology works, and how it's increasingly used in harmful ways — particularly to exploit and target teen girls through non-consensual imagery and online manipulation.

With real-world examples and guided discussion, this workshop will unpack the social, policy, and legal impacts of deepfake abuse. You'll also learn about existing laws, reporting mechanisms, and your digital rights, so you can

understand what protections are available and where gaps still exist.

Importantly, this workshop is about action: you'll explore practical information to promote safer online spaces and accountability for perpetrators and those profiting from deepfakes. At the end of this workshop, you'll be better equipped to recognize deepfake harms, respond safely, and contribute to building a more informed and resilient digital community.

This workshop is produced in collaboration with Justice for Girls.

Sue is a lawyer and human rights advocate with over 15 years of experience advancing the rights and safety of women and girls. She currently serves as Director of Advocacy and Staff Lawyer at Justice for Girls, where she leads legal and systemic advocacy focused on violence against girls, trafficking and online exploitation, and police and state accountability regarding human rights. She has represented incarcerated and marginalized people before multiple tribunals and has extensive experience working with survivors of violence and exploitation.



SUE BROWN

Aislin (they/them) is a staff lawyer in BCCLA's Policy department, working on public interest lobbying, public legal education, LGBTQ2S+ rights, free expression, and the rights of children and youth. Prior to joining BCCLA in 2023, they practiced Nation-side aboriginal law, child protection law, and family law in both Alberta and BC. Outside of law, they have a background in linguistics, Indigenous language documentation/revitalization, and computer science. In their free time, they practice the soft arts: knitting, spinning, weaving, sewing, and quilting.



AISLIN JACKSON

WORKSHOP #8

REAL TALK:

Navigating Misinformation & Making Change

The internet is full of noise — fake news, viral misinformation, and influencers who are selling to rather than informing us. But young people have the power to cut through it, be heard, and drive social change.

Join OpenMedia for an interactive workshop where you'll share your own experiences with online information and misinformation; put your fake-news-detection skills to the test; and explore how young Canadians can shape politics and create real change in their communities and beyond.

This isn't a lecture — it's a conversation. Come ready to engage, challenge what

you see online, and walk away with practical tools and tips for a better online life. We'll answer your questions about digital rights, media literacy, and how to make your voice heard with Canadian politicians.

Whether you're skeptical of everything online or just starting to ask questions, this session is for you.

This workshop is produced by OpenMedia.

Matt is Executive Director of OpenMedia, Canada's grassroots digital rights community of 230,000+ Canadians. Since 2019 he has led OpenMedia campaigns to make Canada's Internet more affordable, private, open and free. Previously he worked at IFEX, the International Freedom of Expression Exchange, defending freedom of expression in partnership with peers in global democracies in crisis. He holds a BA in International Relations from the University of British Columbia, and a Masters of Global Affairs from the University of Toronto.



MATT HATFIELD

Krusheska is the Operations Director at OpenMedia. Her work and ever-growing multidisciplinary background gravitate around the intersection of technology, activism and the arts within social movements with a focus on their essential contribution in the strengthening of our communities.



KRUSHESKA M. QUIRÓS

KNOW YOUR RIGHTS

ARREST HANDBOOK

Understand your rights when interacting with the police with BCCLA's Arrest Handbook. It covers topics like Street Checks, Filming the Police, Resisting a Search, Seizure of Personal Property and has information on your specific rights as a young person.



The Handbook is available in English, French, Punjabi, Spanish, Traditional and Simplified Chinese.

POLICE IN SCHOOLS POCKETBOOK

BCCLA believes that police don't belong in schools. Police can cause significant harm and rights violations for both students and staff.

This pocketbook includes a quick breakdown of your rights when interacting with the police at school, including information related to searches, the arrest process, and safety tips.



SIGN UP TO HEAR MORE!

Keep up to date with everything BCCLA is working on by signing up for our newsletter.

We send weekly emails with updates on where we're in court, what we're fighting for, information on your rights, and what you can do to protect them.



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BCCLA's main office is located on the unceded and ancestral territories of the x^Wməθk^Wəyəm (Musqueam), Sk̓wxwú7mesh (Squamish), and səlilwətał (Tsleil-Waututh) Nations.

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