



NATIONAL CITIZENS INQUIRY

Red Deer, AB

Day 2

April 27, 2023

EVIDENCE

Witness 13: Garry Bredeson

Full Day 2 Timestamp: 10:24:26–10:38:30

Source URL: <https://rumble.com/v2kqsc-national-citizens-inquiry-red-deer-day-2.html>

[00:00:00]

Shawn Buckley

Is Garry Bredesen still here? Yes, Garry's coming to the stand.

Garry, can you please state your full name for the record, spelling your first and last name?

Garry Bredeson

Garry Bredesen, G-A-R-R-Y B-R-E-D-E-S-O-N.

Shawn Buckley

And, Garry, do you promise to tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, so help you God?

Garry Bredeson

I do.

Shawn Buckley

Now, you are a small business owner in the area of freight logistics, and you've been doing that for 25 years.

Garry Bredeson

Yes.

Shawn Buckley

And I forget now, when I wrote down your kids' ages, whether it was at COVID time or now. But I wrote down your kids are 25, 23, and 21. So is that now or when COVID hit?

Garry Bredeson

That's approximately what it is now, yes.

Shawn Buckley

Okay. Now, when COVID hit, your oldest was at UBCO, which is the University of British Columbia University campus in the Okanagan.

Garry Bredeson

Correct.

Shawn Buckley

And your middle child was at the University of Alberta?

Garry Bredeson

Yes.

Shawn Buckley

And your youngest child was at the University of Victoria.

Garry Bredeson

Correct.

Shawn Buckley

So now you're here to testify in— One of the themes is about the impact of the lockdowns and the COVID measures on education, and I'm wondering if you can share with us what you saw and what your thoughts were.

Garry Bredeson

Well, all three boys were in university as of 2019, and we did hear of some rumblings coming out of China around Christmas time in 2019. And at that point, the boys were all home for Christmas, and then on their departure back to university, we told them to be careful not to expose themselves needlessly, and just to be careful.

And promptly, the oldest boy got sick with flu-like symptoms, very severe. He missed about 10 days of school. And then the youngest, he likewise got ill. Probably not as severe, but he did experience discomfort. And from that point on—later on in the school year—around March, we had heard that, I believe it was that year, that the universities were going to shut down and go online for the remainder of the year.

My wife and I were taken unawares of that edict coming down, so we had to scramble to get our youngest back from UVic [University of Victoria] and get him back into Alberta so that he could continue and finish off his year. So basically, we had to scramble, get the truck out, and load up all his stuff out of Res, and get him back to Alberta. So obviously, that was quite the undertaking on last-minute notice.

Shawn Buckley

Can you speak to us about the social impacts on your kids with the lockdowns and online and all of that?

Garry Bredeson

For sure. Obviously, all young people are very social, and them having to come home and learn from our basement online was, it was a definite negative. And it seemed like the universities, they made some effort to make it seamless, but obviously it's never the same when you have two young men in the same room trying to learn with labs and whatnot, online. It's practically impossible for them to absorb and to excel.

From what they accomplished, it's very impressive how they managed to make that happen despite what the government had put in front of them. And basically, it was done to them. It was not something that happened. It was done to them.

Shawn Buckley

Right, and I remember when we were talking, you were kind of just expounding on your first year of university.

[00:05:00]

So your youngest child at UVic, I mean that's when you make your connections, and that's when you meet people, and it's very social. And that, basically, it just didn't go that way for him.

Garry Bredeson

Correct, you know, he— For first year, you know, they want to be making those contacts where you might be in class with these people for the next four or five years. And he never had that opportunity. And next thing you know, everybody's hiding from each other. It was a matter of you're— If you get too close to somebody, you know you're impacting their health, and all of a sudden, you're being labelled a killer.

Shawn Buckley

So it's not just that the universities were shut down, that they weren't having the activities, but it's actually the university students, a lot of them were afraid of each other.

Garry Bredeson

Correct. They didn't know any better than the rest of us; what they were being fed was a continual diet of fear and admonishment for being social, or even just trying to be a regular student. The University of Alberta still has that up on their website. Stay away from each other. Get vaccinated. It's all— It just never stops. How they could ever get beyond that if they ever followed the edicts that the universities were putting out?

Shawn Buckley

Right. And how do you think the quality of education was when they had to switch to online? Clearly you'd already mentioned labs, and I can't see those being very effective. What are your thoughts on the quality of education?

Garry Bredeson

Well, in talking with our boys, obviously it was a clear travesty against their education. They clearly got a much lower level of instruction, and— But on the plus side, we got to pay more.

Shawn Buckley

There's always a silver lining.

Garry Bredeson

Yes.

Shawn Buckley

Now my understanding is that in 2021, in the Fall term—your youngest son was still at UVic—that UVic actually surprisingly did not have a vaccine mandate. So you—as long as you were getting weekly PCR [Polymerase Chain Reaction] testing—you didn't have to be vaccinated to attend. But something happened at Christmas. Tell us about getting them home at Christmas, because that was an interesting year for you.

Garry Bredeson

Yeah, well, during November of that year, we found out that all the roads got washed out of lower mainland BC. And our plane ticket that we had pre-purchased for our youngest coming out of UVic was not going to be honoured because our government deemed that we were unfit to fly with people that were vaccinated. So we were lowered to a lower status and were relegated to crawl on the ground with the bugs. So we had to find him travel, some sort of travel means to get back into Alberta.

We found a group of parents that were in the same position that we were, and we were looking at all options like chartering an airplane, or chartering a bus, or whatever. But what we found out was that even if we could get an airplane chartered for our kids, there was no airport that would accommodate them, because they were unclean.

Shawn Buckley

Right, so even if a chartered plane was there on the tarmac, the airport policy was you couldn't even go on a chartered plane just filled strictly with unvaccinated people. So that was a dead end.

Garry Bredeson

That was a dead end, and even going into a small airplane or airport such as— It was nearby Cochrane, which is just a small airport. But because it's federally funded or—

Shawn Buckley

I think it's constitutional jurisdiction.

Garry Bredeson

Yeah. We weren't able to even accommodate that. So we ended up renting him a car.

[00:10:00]

Thankfully, they allowed us to rent a car because he's only 21 years old. And so he had to navigate the highways, which were torn apart, and take goat trails back home into Alberta. And it was just a nightmare.

Shawn Buckley

Now, I just want to switch gears and ask you how you were personally affected by the mandates and the government measures.

Garry Bredeson

Well when the mandates came down, business stopped because all of our trucks were not allowed to go across a border. So we lost contracts that were pre-negotiated during the previous year. And by the time they opened the borders up again for truck traffic, we basically were squeezed out. And at that point, we had to find a different revenue stream.

And then for ourselves, socially, we couldn't go to restaurants. Friends and family that we normally had no issues with, all of a sudden we were being deemed social outcasts because we took a different mindset than what they did. And if you bring up any sort of evidence or websites, and evidence from revered vaccinologists and virus scientists, they were deemed as people we couldn't refer to because they had an alternative agenda. So therefore, we were effectively shut out.

Shawn Buckley

We're supposed to ask witnesses how they would do things differently. And I know when we were talking, I made a specific note to ask you about personal responsibility, so can you share your thoughts on that?

Garry Bredeson

Well, personal responsibility, we all have to make sure that we are looking into the reasoning behind these laws, or mandates that our government, our representatives are bringing forward to us, ensuring that we are seeing exactly what they are saying is true. We can't just go out and say, "Okay, it's our government. We elected them, so therefore they're telling us the truth." There's just no way that we can just rely on that. We need to go out there, find the truth, make sure that we spread the truth, and we are always asking questions of our elected officials.

It's always handy that they are not allowing us to talk to them directly anymore, because of the COVID issues of— Whenever there is an election, we cannot ask direct questions because we might be spreading death and destruction as far as the government is concerned.

Shawn Buckley

Thank you. I'll ask the commissioners if they have any questions for you. There being no questions, Garry, on behalf of the National Citizens Inquiry, we sincerely thank you for coming and testifying.

Garry Bredeson

Thank you.

[00:14:04]

Final Review and Approval: Anna Cairns, August 30, 2023.

The evidence offered in this transcript is a true and faithful record of witness testimony given during the National Citizens Inquiry (NCI) hearings. The transcript was prepared by members of a team of volunteers using an “intelligent verbatim” transcription method.

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