



NATIONAL CITIZENS INQUIRY

Ottawa, ON

Day 2

May 18, 2023

EVIDENCE

Witness 11: William Bigger

Full Day 2 Timestamp: 10:47:55–10:56:12

Source URL: <https://rumble.com/v2ogkb8-national-citizens-inquiry-ottawa-day-2.html>

[00:00:00]

Wayne Lenhardt

Our next witness is Mr. William Bigger. William, could you give us your full name and spell it for us, and then I'll do an oath with you.

William Bigger

William Bigger, W-I-L-L-I-A-M B-I-G-G-E-R.

Wayne Lenhardt

Do you promise to tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth in your testimony?

William Bigger

Yes, sir.

Wayne Lenhardt

What you're going to do today, I guess, is just outline the problems that you had as COVID developed in your community. You live in St. Catherine's, Ontario, correct?

William Bigger

Yes.

Wayne Lenhardt

And you've lived there for quite a while.

William Bigger

My whole life.

Wayne Lenhardt

Okay. In 2020, you were 18 years old. Tell us what you were doing in 2020, just as the COVID problems were developing.

William Bigger

Yes, so as you said, I was 18 at the time, freshly out of high school and was a very active member in my church as a kids administration leader with younger kids. I also was a competitive swimmer for our local Special Olympics swim team. I competed with them since I was very young. I was born with autism, so I always swim with them as a form of physical therapy and was pursuing a job out of high school, just at a local sports venue.

Wayne Lenhardt

And you had a job at that time?

William Bigger

I did yes, at the time. I had held that after high school and then once everything shut down, all of our events were cancelled, so I lost that job. Our churches closed, so I lost my leading opportunities and I couldn't swim anymore.

Wayne Lenhardt

So by August of 2020, you were out of work.

William Bigger

Yes, sir.

Wayne Lenhardt

By the end of 2020, you did get another job. Correct?

William Bigger

Yes, I did. After being off work due to lockdowns for several months, I was able to find work in our city as a new sub restaurant was opening up.

Wayne Lenhardt

Your family sort of was having problems as well during this period of COVID, correct?

William Bigger

Yes, unfortunately, both my parents both work in what were considered high-risk sectors, the hospital and a firefighter, and this became very challenging for them.

Wayne Lenhardt

Were both of your parents working at the time?

William Bigger

Yes. During the whole time, they were still able to work with challenges, with all the PPE and all that in their jobs.

Wayne Lenhardt

And there was concern about your father's job, which would have caused some serious problems, correct?

William Bigger

Yeah, sorry. It was just, very emotional.

Wayne Lenhardt

So you managed to get a job in a submarine shop in 2021 by April. Did you still have that job? What was happening?

William Bigger

Yes, I did have that job for nine to ten months in total. Through those nine to ten months, it was very challenging. They had all the social distancing and masks in place. At that time, there was talks about the vaccine as it rolled out, but nothing in place in terms of mandates. But it was just a challenging work environment, having to be careful where you stood and wearing the mask was difficult for me. Just to be able to understand and communicate with people and read their facial expressions.

Wayne Lenhardt

You did get a job at Costco at some point, correct?

William Bigger

Yes, I did.

[00:05:00]

At the beginning of 2021, around March, I was able to get another job there. Just out of my previous job, I had a fear that if I stayed there any longer, I would eventually have lost it due to vaccines. So I was trying to pursue work, and then I was able to find work.

Wayne Lenhardt

And you never did get the so-called vaccine, did you?

William Bigger

No, sir.

Wayne Lenhardt

Okay. Was there a reason for that?

William Bigger

As a family we decided that it was best to not participate. When I was very young, I'd had a bad response to my year one boosters, which I was, after, in the hospital for a short period of time. And so I just let my parents consult with family doctors and experts that they were in contact with to decide the course of action, so they decided to avoid taking them.

Wayne Lenhardt

Okay. I think I'll stop there and ask the commissioners if they have any questions for you. Anyone? Any last items you want to tell the commissioners?

William Bigger

I just really want people to know that if they're watching this that their stories can be heard and that they're not alone. These past few years have been challenging for everyone and I just want it all to be over.

Wayne Lenhardt

Okay, on behalf of the National Citizens Inquiry, I want to thank you for coming and telling us your evidence. Thank you again.

Commissioner Kaikkonen

I just have a quick question about you worked with youth. Do you know what happened with the youth when everything shut down? Did they feel the same way you did?

William Bigger

Can you repeat the question?

Commissioner Kaikkonen

You said that you worked with youth,

William Bigger

Yep.

Commissioner Kaikkonen

prior to the lockdowns? Do you have any understanding of what happened with them in terms of lockdown? Do they feel the same way you do, or do you have anything to add about the youth?

William Bigger

Over the past little while I've been slowly reconnecting with that group that I have served in my church. Although I have not maybe asked what their experiences have been, I've been

really wanting to, just over the past couple years of how it's affected them as even younger than I am—especially those that are younger and were still in school and how that would affect them. I haven't really gotten a chance to ask, but I would really love to.

Commissioner Kaikkonen

Thank you very much.

William Bigger

You're welcome.

Wayne Lenhardt

Any other last questions for Mr. Bigger? Okay, I want to thank you on behalf of the commission of inquiry for your testimony. Thank you again.

William Bigger

Thank you.

[00:08:32]

Final Review and Approval: Margaret Phillips, September 6, 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.

For further information on the transcription process, method, and team, see the NCI website: <https://nationalcitizensinquiry.ca/about-these-transcripts/>

NCI | CeNC