

Calgary's Resistance to Changing from "Alderman" to "Councillor"

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Can a Just City be defined in terms of the rights of citizens to be treated with respect and dignity? All major Canadian municipalities with the exception of Calgary, Alberta call their elected municipal representatives "Councillors." This article presents an overview of struggle since the mid 1980s by feminists to change "Alderman" to an inclusive term that does not incorrectly identify the gender of women on City Council. In 2003 nine citizens, after engaging in numerous forms of social action, filed a complaint to the Alberta Human Rights and Citizenship Commission. This complaint was dismissed in 2007 as well as the subsequent appeal. Understanding the resistance of the City Council and its power base may reveal fundamental differences in viewpoints among various parties about the nature of a Just City and equitable treatment of women. While the pursuit of justice through the Human Rights route may have been an inappropriate, but understandable action, the question remains: what mechanisms or avenues are available for those who believe that Calgary is wedded to an out-dated tradition that disrespects women? *[Article copies available for a fee from The Transformative Studies Institute. E-mail address: journal@transformativestudies.org Website: <http://www.transformativestudies.org> ©2009 by The Transformative Studies Institute. All rights reserved.]*

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Although most major Canadian cities have changed the names of their elected municipal representatives from "Alderman" to "Councillor,"

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