

Jordan Peterson: Univ. Laying Groundwork to 'Take Action Against Me'

Most people have never used the pronouns “zie” or “hir.” But Jordan Peterson’s refusal to do so might cost him his job.

Peterson, a tenured research and clinical psychologist, received a second letter from the university warning him that his opposition to genderless pronouns is a cause of concern. He shared contents of the letter, dated Oct. 18, [with the Daily Signal](#):

The impact of your behavior runs the risk of undermining your ability to conduct essential components of your job as a faculty member and we urge you to consider your obligations as a faculty member to act in a manner that is consistent with the law and with university policy.

Peterson [has expressed opposition to Bill C-16](#), legislation that would alter Canadian law to include as a protected class people who identify as transgendered or gender neutral. He also objects to being compelled to use the genderless pronouns “zie” or “hir”, terms he says are concocted by “a small coterie of ideologically motivated people.”

Peterson is aware that this stance may very well end up costing him his position at the university.

“I think the university will send me a third warning letter, because I think they’re getting the documentation in order, and then I think there’s a reasonable probability that they’ll take action against me.”

There is also the “nontrivial probability” he will be hauled before the Ontario Human Rights Tribunal. But one gets the

feeling Peterson believes this is a principal worth fighting for.

“The law should be very careful when it mandates what people have to say,” Peterson told the Daily Signal. “There’s a big difference between being required to not say something, and being required to say something. It’s a different category of law. One is closing your mouth. The other one is putting a hand inside you and forcing you to be a puppet.”

It’s a distinction worth noting. Violations of free speech usually take the form of preventing a group or individual from freely communicating an idea. Peterson is staring down something different. He is fighting for the right to not utter words he doesn’t want to use (presumably because he finds them untrue or objectionable).

One could argue that it’s an issue that transcends free speech. Requiring citizens to use certain government-approved language is arguably more intrusive (and more Orwellian) than banning certain words or ideas.

Peterson, to his credit, has tried to have a dialogue with his critics. But these efforts have not been productive (see below).

Who is more intolerant here: Peterson or the people who accuse

him of Nazism for resisting having words placed in his mouth?