



The Right Honourable Stephen Harper
Prime Minister of Canada
Office of the Prime Minister
80 Wellington Street
Ottawa, ON K1A 0A2

August 5, 2010

Open Letter to Prime Minister Stephen Harper: Maintain the Long Form Census

Dear Mr. Prime Minister:

The Canadian Association of Social Workers (CASW) is deeply concerned with the recent decision of the Government of Canada to cancel the 2011 long form Census and replace it with a less reliable voluntary survey. Since the proposed Census change was announced, CASW has keenly followed the resulting debate. We remain hopeful that a compromise solution will be found that maintains the credibility and integrity of the Census.

An unfortunate consequence of replacing the Census with a voluntary survey will be that the most vulnerable in society will not be accurately accounted for in the data collected since they are among those that are less likely to complete a voluntary survey. It is our understanding that the current Census information collected, analyzed and disseminated by Statistics Canada is considered world class. The lack of reliable data in the future could well undermine the delivery of social and community services by all levels of government and service agencies.

This letter is being sent on behalf of the over 17,800 social workers that CASW represent through our provincial and territorial member organizations. We urge you to reconsider your decision and allow the 2011 long form Census to proceed unchanged. Social workers are delivering vital services from coast to coast to coast in Canada and we depend on the data collected by the Census to provide the best practices for every community served.

Sincerely,

Darlene MacDonal
President, CASW

cc. Honourable Michael Ignatieff, Leader of the Official Opposition
Honourable Jack Layton, Leader of the New Democratic Party
Honourable Gilles Duceppe, Leader of the Bloc Québécois
Honourable Tony Clement, Minister of Industry

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