



Ontario Catholic School  
Trustees' Association

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Patrick Daly, *President*  
Beverley Eckensweiler, *Vice President*  
Nick Milanetti, *Executive Director*

February 20, 2018

**MEMORANDUM**

**TO:** Chairpersons and Directors of Education  
- All Catholic District School Boards

**FROM:** Patrick J. Daly, President

**SUBJECT: Government of Canada Summer Jobs Program**

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Further to our memos of January 31, 2018 and February 8, 2018, we would like to provide you with a recent update (Appendix A) we received from the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops. We provide it to you for your information and with appreciation to our Bishops for their tremendous leadership regarding this important matter.

We encourage all Catholic boards whether they have applied for funding under the Summer Jobs Program or not, to send letters of deep concern to Prime Minister Trudeau, Minister Hajdu and your local members of Federal Parliament. In this regard you will find attached Appendix B, the February 2, 2018 OCSTA letter. We would appreciate it if you could forward to us a copy of your letter as well as any responses you receive.

*Attachments*

## Appendix A

I wish to provide you an update on the Government of Canada Summer Jobs program. As you may be aware, organizations, which have applied to the Program (either by altering or modifying the problematic attestation, or submitting a paper application without checking the attention box), have begun receiving notification from Service Canada stating that their applications are deemed incomplete. Service Canada is giving organizations 10 days from the date of its letter to check the attestation box or have their applications rejected. Attached to this email is a copy of the Service Canada letter (the original in English only) which was scanned from a website.

Below is an email from Mr. Barry W. Bussey, Director, Legal Affairs for The Canadian Council of Christian Charities (CCCC), one of the organizations that signed the interfaith faith statement released 25 January. Mr. Bussey is recommending that charities, which are still unwilling to affirm the attestation, respond to Service Canada's letter by requesting an accommodation under the Charter and the Canadian Human Rights Act. Although it seems unlikely such a response will alter the government's position, it may be of evidentiary value in future litigation at either the Federal or Supreme Court. A template of the letter is attached in English and French for possible distribution in your diocese/eparchy should it prove useful to any applicant wishing to respond in this way.

Lastly, the CCCB has updated its website with the statements and letters by Catholic dioceses expressing their concerns with the government's requirements for 2018 Canada Summer Jobs program, together with a listing of media coverage both before and after the interfaith news conference held in Toronto on 25 January 2018. For your convenience, this bilingual listing is found at:

[http://www.cccb.ca/site/images/stories/pdf/Statements\\_media\\_coverage.pdf](http://www.cccb.ca/site/images/stories/pdf/Statements_media_coverage.pdf)

Sincerely yours in Jesus with Mary,

Rev. Msgr. Frank Leo, Jr.  
General Secretary

**Important: If Your Canada Summer Jobs Application Has Been Returned...**

Dear Ministry Leader,

Over the past days, we have received a number of notices from charities that their applications for funding through the Canada Summer Job Grant program have been returned due to "missing information" as a result of submitting an altered or modified attestation.

According to the Service Canada notification, any alteration or modification of the attestation will result in an incomplete application.

However, Service Canada permits applicants to resubmit their application within 10 days of the rejection with the offending attestation completed in order to perfect their application.

Essentially, Service Canada is asking charities to accept the Government's attestation despite their religious and conscience rights.

**CCCC's Recommendations**

CCCC suggests that charities that are unable to check the attestation box unamended resend their application along with the following request for an accommodation under the *Charter of Rights and Freedoms* and the *Canadian Human Rights Act*.

To Whom It May Concern:

*We have received your notification that our application has not been processed because "...the attestation cannot be altered or modified. The "I attest" box must be checked and the application signed."*

*However, as we explained to you in our application, the requirement of the government to force us to make the attestation is a violation of our constitutional rights. Compelled speech violates our long-held democratic rights that have existed before the Charter of Rights and Freedoms, have been reiterated in the Charter, and are recognized in the Canadian Human Rights Act.*

*Our religious beliefs and obligations, our conscience, our beliefs, thoughts, and opinions all preclude us from making the attestation as set out in the application and guide, including the supplementary information.*

*It is for this reason that we request an accommodation of our Charter rights to*

- *freedom of religion;*
- *freedom of conscience;*
- *freedom of belief;*
- *freedom of opinion;*

- *freedom of thought;*
- *freedom of expression; and*
- *equality rights;*
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*as well as our right to not be discriminated against on the basis of religion under the Canadian Human Rights Act.*

*We trust that you will consider the Charter and human rights accommodations we require.*



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February 2, 2018

The Right Honourable Justin Trudeau, Prime Minister of Canada  
The Honourable Patty Hajdu, Minister of Employment  
House of Commons  
Ottawa, ON K1A 0A6

Dear Prime Minister Trudeau & Minister Hajdu:

I am writing you to express the deep concern of the Ontario Catholic School Trustees' Association with regard to the additional requirements of the application process of the Canada Summer Jobs Program. Our Association was founded in 1930 and represents the 29 English Catholic District School Boards in Ontario. These publicly funded school systems educate approximately 545,000 students from Junior Kindergarten to Grade 12 and many thousands more through our Continuing Education Programs. Collectively the locally elected trustees who serve on these boards represent the almost 2.2 million Catholic School ratepayers in Ontario.

For many years Catholic School Boards in Ontario have applied for and received grants through the Canada Summer Jobs Program. The grants received enable them to provide meaningful employment to a number of young people. Consistent with their missions, these Catholic School Boards often target this funding to socio-economic disadvantaged youth in their communities.

The requirements in the current application process clearly and most unfairly violate religious freedom and will serve to deny many vulnerable and disadvantaged young people summer employment. We urge and call upon you to immediately amend the Summer Jobs guidelines and application process so as to permit faith based organizations like those we represent to remain true "to their communal identity and beliefs".

Yours very truly,

Patrick J. Daly  
President