



Archdiocese
of Toronto

Catholic Pastoral Centre
1155 Yonge Street
Toronto, Ontario M4T 1W2
T 416.934.0606
www.archtoronto.org

MEMO

TO: Friends of the Archdiocese of Toronto

FROM: Neil MacCarthy, Director, Office of Public Relations & Communications

DATE: March 9, 2018

RE: Canada Summer Jobs Program Update

2 Pages Via Email

I would like to provide an update on the Canada Summer Jobs Program. Groups from the Archdiocese of Toronto and Catholic Charities that have applied for the grant are awaiting a response based on their most recent application – our churches and charities cannot affirm a problematic attestation and have asked for accommodation under the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. Hundreds of other faith communities and charitable organizations across Canada are in a similar position. On March 1, an opposition motion on the issue was tabled in the House of Commons. The content of the motion reads as follows:

That, in the opinion of the House, organizations that engage in non-political non-activist work, such as feeding the homeless, helping refugees, and giving kids an opportunity to go to camp, should be able to access Canada Summer Jobs funding regardless of their private convictions and regardless of whether or not they choose to sign the application attestation.

We expect that the House of Commons will vote on this motion on March 19. While the motion will not require the government to change the policy, it raises critical attention to our concerns and will assist in shaping public and political debate on the issue. Over the next 10 days leading up to the vote, MPs are in their ridings. This is an excellent opportunity to flag the issue once again and to contact your MP, asking them to support the motion.

Enclosed in this communication is a sample letter you may wish to send to your Member of Parliament. The letter and other resources on this issue can also be found at:

www.archtoronto.org/summerjobs

You can find your MP's contact information [here](#). It is important that our elected members hear from their constituents on this issue, especially from those most directly impacted by the Canada Summer Jobs Grant program.

As we anticipate the vote taking place on March 19, Feast of St. Joseph, Patron Saint of Canada, we also invite your prayers as so many across our country are impacted by this important issue. Thank you for your continued cooperation in raising awareness on this issue.

Related information to help you prepare your letter about problems with the Canada Summer Jobs Grant program:

- *Find your MP's contact information*
<https://www.ourcommons.ca/Parliamentarians/en/members>
- *Helpful background material on the Canada Summer Jobs issue can be found at:*
www.archtoronto.org/summerjobs
www.TheEFC.ca/SummerJobs

Sample letter for Member of Parliament re: March 1 Motion on Canada Summer Jobs Grant Program – given time constraints, we encourage you send your communication by email but it can also be sent by post

[date]

[first name, last name], MP
House of Commons
Ottawa, ON K1A 0A6

Dear [MP's name],

Thank you for all that you do to serve our community and advocate for our concerns. I understand that on or about March 19, Members of Parliament will vote on a motion in the House of Commons on the Canada Summer Jobs grant program.

The motion outlines that organizations that are engaged in non-political, non-activist work should be able to access summer student funding regardless of their private convictions, and whether or not they sign the application attestation.

I agree, and I am writing to ask for your support of this motion in the House of Commons.

As a constituent, I believe that individuals and organizations should not be forced to make an attestation of values in order to be eligible for a government program or service. I believe this requirement fails to respect freedom of belief and expression in Canada, and in fact violates these fundamental freedoms.

I would respectfully ask that you and members of your party uphold the *Charter* guarantees of freedom of religion, belief, expression and opinion. These are fundamental freedoms for our country. Please let me know whether you will support this motion and what steps you are taking to remove or amend the Canada Summer Jobs attestation, which has caused great distress for thousands of charities across Canada.

Sincerely,

[your name and address if sent by mail]