



Українська Католицька Єпархія Торонта The Ukrainian Catholic Eparchy of Toronto

STATEMENT ON THE CANADA SUMMER JOBS GRANT

Христос Воскрес!

Дорогі в Христі, Вітаю вас всіх Воскресінням нашого Спаса Ісуса Христа!

As you may be aware, in 2018 the Government of Canada has imposed a new requirement to support so-called reproductive rights in order to apply for a Canada Summer Jobs grant. Many of Ukrainian and Catholic organizations have greatly benefited from these grants in previous years. Like my brother bishops, I am deeply saddened by the discrimination our Church is facing in light of the new ideological requirements as an eligibility requirement which has been inserted into this program. I applaud those organizations, such as the Ukrainian Catholic Women's League of Canada, which have already officially stood up to this requirement in defense of the right to teach and defend freedom of conscience without fear of discrimination from the government.

The revised application Canada Summer Jobs application requires any applicants to accept that their organization's mandate "respect individual human rights" which includes "reproductive rights" – that is, including the so-called right to abortion. This is not acceptable. The hierarchy of the Ukrainian Catholic Church of Canada, through our membership in the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops, is one of *ninety* religious groups, both Christian and non-Christian, which have signed an objection to these requirements. The signatures include many Orthodox Churches, including Metropolitan Yuri of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of Canada. A copy of this interfaith letter of objection is attached.

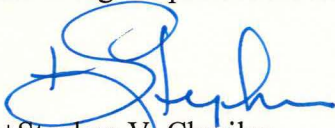
Considering the serious implications of the government beginning to act discriminatorily towards those who believe in the most basic principles of religious freedom as well as the fundamental right to life, I am urging our faithful to consider the *serious* issues that are at play with such an attestation. There is a legitimate question about the ability of Catholic chaplains to continue to participate in organizations which, by taking such government funding, will have *explicitly* stated their organization has a mandate which supports rights including the so-called right to abortion.

Throughout the history of Ukraine, including the ongoing war in Ukraine, the Ukrainian Catholic Church plays a critical role in the fight for freedom and sovereignty. In fighting for its beliefs and freedom of worship, our clergy and faithful were forced underground, imprisoned, exiled, and executed for their ministry to the Ukrainian people. Our faithful must be aware of the importance of the basic human right to dissent and have freedom of thought according to one's conscience and religious belief. It is the responsibility of all to stand up against any systemic discrimination by the

government in a democratic society; this is a principle which Ukrainians certainly understand intimately. We hope that we can count on the solidarity of the Ukrainian community to stand for the rights of all Canadians to be free from government coercion in their beliefs by not agreeing to the new attestation, and making our objection known to the government.

Any organization that has submitted an application for a grant is urged to withdraw its application and return any funding received, explaining that the organization does not support the right to abortion.

Invoking the protection of the Most Holy Theotokos,


+Stephen V. Chmilar
Eparchial Bishop



Attachments:

January 2018 Interfaith Statement on Canada Summer Jobs, available at:
http://www.cccb.ca/site/images/stories/pdf/Interfaith_statement_-_CSJ_Final_EN_signatures.pdf

January 25, 2018

Dear Prime Minister/Minister Hajdu,

Re. Changes to the Canada Summer Jobs Grant Program

We the undersigned leaders of diverse faith communities and organizations in Canada, call on the Prime Minister and the Government of Canada to amend the Canada Summer Jobs guidelines and application process so that it does not compel agreement or belief, and allows religious organizations to stay true to their communal identity and beliefs. The new application requires each organization to give non-negotiable and unqualified affirmation of certain beliefs held by the current government.

Canada has a long history of cooperation and collaboration between religious organizations and governments in our health care and social welfare systems, and in many other areas of life.

Faith-based organizations wish to continue to partner with the federal government in delivering programming and services to vulnerable members of their local communities, including children and youth, newcomers to Canada, and people experiencing poverty and homelessness.

However, with the changes to the Canada Summer Jobs guidelines, many organizations will be deemed ineligible because they are unable or unwilling to attest that their "core mandate" and beliefs align with the current government's position. These groups are being denied equal access to a government benefit solely because of their religious beliefs or conscientious objection.

In managing its programs, the government should respect and accommodate the diversity of values and beliefs within Canadian society and must itself abide by the *Charter* in its treatment of individuals and groups. The fundamental freedoms of conscience and religion, thought, belief, opinion and expression, as guaranteed in the *Charter*, must be respected and affirmed in legislation, regulations and policy.

The promise of a free and democratic society is that there be no religious or ideological tests or conditions to receiving government benefits or protection.

The changes to the Canada Summer Jobs guidelines and application not only violate the fundamental freedoms of faith-based organizations, they also significantly impact the broader communities served by their programs, often the most vulnerable in Canadian society.

Canada is known and widely respected as a religiously plural and multicultural society. Respect for the diversity of beliefs of all Canadians and meaningful engagement with those who hold differing beliefs is essential to maintaining a robust democracy. Please ensure that Canadians continue to benefit from collaboration between governments and faith-based organizations working together for the common good of our country.

Sincerely,

Dave Addison, Executive Director
Toronto City Mission

Rabea Allos
Canadian Middle Eastern Christian Congress

Adriana Bara, Executive Director
Canadian Centre for Ecumenism

Mr. Kerry Belt
President
Rocky Mountain College

James Beerley, DCD, President
Crossworld Canada

Rev. Dr. Andrew Bennett
Director, Cardus Law

Father Daniel Bessada
St. Mary and St. John the Beloved
Coptic Orthodox Church

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Rev. Wesley Mills, President
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H.G. Anba Mina, Bishop of
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The Coptic Orthodox Church in Canada

Dr. Lawson Murray, President
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Cardinal Thomas Collins
Archbishop of Toronto

Bren Cressman,
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Messianic Vision Canada

John G. Denbok, Executive Director
SIM Canada

Eric Derksen, President
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Maureen Dinner, MA, Executive Director
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Church in the Hills

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Edmonton Interfaith Centre for
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Evangel Chapel
Fort St. John, British Columbia

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Bruce Fawcett, Ph.D.
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Cliff Fletcher, Bishop
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Geri Rodman, President
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Rev. Len Goddard, President
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Rev. Richard Janes, President
Master's College & Seminary

Archbishop Shane B. Janzen
The Anglican Catholic Church of Canada (TAC)

Imam Ilyas Sidyot
The Islamic Association of Saskatchewan
Saskatoon Inc.

Dan Slade, International Director
Partners in Harvest

His Eminence Metropolitan Archbishop Sotirios
Primate, Greek Orthodox Metropolis of Toronto
& All Canada

Terry Smith, Executive Director
Canadian Baptist Ministries

His Excellency Bishop Bawai Soro
Chaldean Eparchy of Mar Addai

Michael Stone, Lead Pastor
Crossroads Community Church

Philippe Straforelli, Director
Christian Life Assembly

Rabbi Chaim Strauchler
Shaarei Shomayim Congregation

Gerry Taillon, National Ministry Leader
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