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[www.christianfarmers.org](http://www.christianfarmers.org)



642 Woolwich Street,

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January 29, 2018

Honourable Patty Hajdu  
Minister of Employment, Workforce Development and Labour  
House of Commons  
Ottawa, Ontario  
K1A 0A6

Dear Minister Hajdu:

### **Request to rescind values clause in Canada Summer Jobs applications**

The Christian Farmers Federation of Ontario (CFFO) is an Accredited Farm Organization representing the interests of over 4,000 farm families in Ontario.

The CFFO is concerned about the recent change to the Canada Summer Jobs program application, which requires applicants to attest that "both the job and the organization's core mandate respect individual human rights in Canada, including the values underlying the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms as well as other rights. These include reproductive rights and the right to be free from discrimination on the basis of sex, religion, race, national or ethnic origin, colour, mental or physical disability, sexual orientation or gender identity or expression."

Numerous religious organizations have publicly announced their decision to refrain from applying for this program because this clause compels them to affirm values that go against their Charter-protected freedoms of conscience and religion. Several of our members, who have employed students on their farm businesses through this program, are facing the same decision.

We urge the Liberal government to uphold the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, which protects freedom of conscience and religion. Our members respect human rights, comply with Canadian law, and pose no threats to their employees simply by holding religious beliefs that differ from current government ideology.

We thank the Liberal government for encouraging religious organizations to continue to apply to the Canadian Summer Jobs program. You have clarified that this attestation is only meant to target those organizations whose "core mandate" is to promote a pro-life stance. Unfortunately, for most people, matters of religion and conscience cannot be compartmentalized, and checking this box is not a simple matter.

THE GENERAL FARM ORGANIZATION THAT IS ROOTED IN FAITH & GUIDED BY VALUES



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Several organizations and business owners are choosing to submit paper applications along with a written statement objecting to the attestation. We hope that such applications will be accepted and fairly assessed.

But that is not enough.

**We respectfully request that the attestation be removed from the application process entirely.**

This attestation denies citizens equal access to a government benefit on the sole basis of their refusal to affirm government ideology on social policies. This is a dangerous precedent to set in a multi-cultural, progressive, and tolerant country.

We are certain that, upon deeper meditation, the federal government will recognize that this attestation is a first toehold in a dangerous move towards overstepping the bounds of just, democratic, and neutral government.

We respectfully request that you revisit this policy in light of our concerns and reinstate eligibility for the Canada Summer Jobs program to organizations and business owners that do not share the government's views on social policy.

Sincerely,

Clarence Nywening, President

Christian Farmers Federation of Ontario

MV

CC: Prime Minister Justin Trudeau; Hon. Andrew Scheer, Leader of the Opposition; Hon. Steven Blaney, Employment, Workforce Development and Labour Critic; Hon. Jody Wilson-Raybould, Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada; Hon. William Francis Morneau, Minister of Finance; Hon. Bev Shipley, MP Lambton–Kent–Middlesex; Hon. Brian May, MP Cambridge; Hon. Ben Lobb, MP Huron-Bruce; Hon. John Nater, MP Perth-Wellington; The Evangelical Fellowship of Canada

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