

Update on the Canada Summer Jobs program – June 12, 2018

Churches, ministries and other employers across the country who could not sign the new attestation without qualification have started receiving official rejection letters from Service Canada. Some groups who were approved have decided not to sign the contract and accept the grant.

Legal challenges

There are now two legal challenges to the attestation:

- Toronto Right to Life launched a court challenge in January. The hearings are expected to take place this fall
- The Justice Centre for Constitutional Freedoms has filed a court application on behalf of a small, family-owned business in southern Alberta called A-I Irrigation & Technical Services. A hearing is expected in November.

More court challenges are expected. The EFC will intervene in one or more of the challenges where our legal support is most helpful and strategic. The EFC is collaborating on a legal strategy with the Canadian Council of Christian Charities and Christian Legal Fellowship.

Two things you can do

1. Contact your MP. Call, write or ask for a meeting. Even if you have already contacted your MP, it is important to communicate that you still care about this issue and want to see it resolved.

See the EFC's sample letter to an MP ([.docx](#) or [.pdf](#)). There is also helpful information in the EFC's talking points ([.docx](#) or [.pdf](#)). You can also find more on the Canada Summer Jobs program on our website www.TheEFC.ca/SummerJobs. For example:

- There has been widespread criticism of the attestation, even from groups that support abortion, like the Canadian Civil Liberties Association and the B.C. Civil Liberties Association.
- There are simple solutions available to resolve this issue for next year.

Even if MPs don't agree with you, the more they hear from their constituents, the greater the likelihood that they will let their caucus and party leader know of the concerns they are hearing and ask for change.

2. Tell your friends and neighbours about the issue and your concerns. Give them information about the attestation. Ask if they would like to join you in expressing concern to your MP.

Why this matters

This attestation sets a very troubling precedent of requiring respect for values and rights in order to be eligible for a government program. This kind of values test violates the fundamental freedoms of Canadians guaranteed in the *Charter*, such as the freedom of religion, conscience, belief, speech and opinion.

The impact of this policy will also be felt by communities, reducing or limiting the programs and services offered to the most vulnerable Canadians. It diminishes our ability to serve our communities and denies students meaningful summer employment in service.