

August 27, 2010

Thank you Mr. Chair, Committee Members, and fellow participants. I am happy to be here today. You have me on a good day, after returning from Yellowknife late last evening, my brain is rather foggy.

CCSD is Canada's longest established social policy organization, founded in 1920, with a long history of working collaboratively with successive Canadian governments. CCSD developed the concepts some of the most fundamental social programs including: EI, Disability and Old Age Pension some ...

One of CCSD's flagship programs today is called the Community Social Data Strategy. This is a pan Canadian partnership where members collectively purchase \$900,000 worth of Census and other stats-can data at a discounted rate. Consortium members include Police Services, municipalities, united ways, provincial government departments, and front line service agencies. The partners use the data to respond to troubling trends in their local communities, the information allows communities to focus their efforts at the neighborhood level making better use of our tax dollars and targeting services that respond most in need.

Losing the Long Form Census is equal to the Government turning off Canada's navigation system. Those who support this decision must consider the impact of very carefully. I ask you today, are you willing to accept responsibility for the following? Ten years from now, when your local hospital has an empty maternity ward and your parents can't get geriatric care because the decision makers didn't have accurate census data to plan which services are required, what will you say to them?

Ten years from now, when the police take five minutes longer than necessary to respond to the burglary next door, and the thieves get away because the police force didn't have the information from the long form census data to effectively plan their staffing allocation, what will you say to your neighbors?

Ten years from now, when there is an epidemic of a new disease and doctors don't have accurate population data to plan how to respond, will you take your share of the blame for the resulting deaths?

Ten years from now, when a new school sits empty on one side of your town, while another is overcrowded on the other side of town because the census data that informed school planning and construction is no longer available, will you pay for the additional busing costs?

Ten years from now, when the fire truck takes an extra three minutes to respond to the blaze at the seniors home because they didn't have the census data to determine the best location for the new fire hall, will you console the families of those who didn't make it out in time?

Ten years from now, when your church has to close because of an unanticipated decline in membership, while the congregation speaking a different language is filling a school auditorium because there was no information to anticipate changes in the community, will you take responsibility?

Ten years from now, when governments at all levels are wasting money delivering services less efficiently than they could with more accurate information, will you be cheerfully - and silently - paying for the wasted time and resources?

Over 340 organizations who serve or represent the ordinary Canadians you wish to hear from have spoken out very clearly. They have put forward thoughtful alternatives to canceling this important tool.

They have responded to the concerns about privacy, intrusiveness, and coercion.

Privacy? Stats Can is a fortress, our information is virtually impenetrable

Intrusive? There are many measures, rules and regulations that could be considered intrusive; seat belts, stop signs, and airport security. We all understand that these are put in place, for our collective well-being. The same can be said for the long form census.

Coercive? We agree with the government, no one should be jailed for not filling it out, and we all know no one has.