



OFFICE OF THE ARCHBISHOP

Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ,

**Re: Federal Government Grant for Hiring for Summer Jobs**

By now you may have heard the news that the government of Canada has made a change to its Summer Jobs program. Applicants are now required to sign an attestation that expresses support for “reproductive rights,” which explicitly include abortion, in order to qualify for grants under this program.

This attestation is unacceptable. In effect, it simply excludes any Catholic parish, organization or charity from funding for hiring a summer student.

Of course, we do support the rights enshrined in the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. These include the right to life, the right to freedom of conscience and religion, and the right to freedom of expression. Clearly, the government is infringing these same rights by imposing and insisting upon the new requirement.

No law confers the right to abortion; in fact, Canada is one of the few Western countries that has no law governing abortion at all. While this so-called “right” or belief may be promoted by the current government, there should be no compulsion on all Canadians to embrace it in order to receive government funding of any kind. It is my hope that the government will hear the sincere protests raised across the country and delete this requirement.

In the meantime, I advise all Catholic parishes, organizations and charities in the Archdiocese of Edmonton not to sign this attestation if they are applying for a Summers Jobs grant. I also encourage anyone making an application under the Summer Jobs Program to inform their Member of Parliament as to the reason why they are unable to sign the attestation. Life is a sacred gift from God, to be respected and treasured at all times. This is a simple truth on which we cannot and will not compromise.

Yours sincerely in Christ,

✠Richard W. Smith  
Archbishop of Edmonton  
23 January 2018