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July 14, 2010

Rt. Hon. Stephen Harper, P.C., M.P.
Prime Minister of Canada
Langevin Block
80 Wellington Street
Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0A2

BY FAX AND MAIL

Dear Prime Minister:

We write on behalf of Canadian Jewish Congress, United Israel Appeal Federations Canada and the Jewish Federations representing the central organizational bodies of local communities across Canada, respectfully to urge your government to reverse its decision to eliminate the mandatory long-form that has customarily be sent to one in five households during a national census. The overwhelmingly negative response to the cancellation of the long-form speaks volumes about the profound concerns of an array of Canadian policy-makers and analysts from academia, businesses, organizations, associations and communities who have come to rely on the crucial data gleaned from this invaluable resource.

Your government's rationale that Canadians regarded the long-form as an intrusive invasion of privacy does not seem to be supported by credible data. Anecdotally, it would be just as defensible to assert that while some Canadians may have grumbled just a bit while filling out the long-form, many readily embraced it as a civic duty.

In Canada, the decennial and five-year censuses have proven over the decades to be enormously useful tools toward accomplishing two key national objectives: the nurturing of Canadian identity and attachment and the gathering of critical demographic data.

Jewish federations and service agencies across Canada have long regarded responses to the census ethnic and religious identity questions, especially from the more-detailed long-form, as a critical source of information for planning, fundraising and implementing programs and services that support, *inter alia*, the cultural, social, healthcare, educational, housing, recreational and spiritual needs of our communities.

Such demographic data, especially from successive ten-year long-form responses, have enhanced the capacity of the Jewish and other ethnic and religious communities throughout Canada to engage in more accurate long-range planning and to shape more appropriate responses to changing communal needs.

By eliminating the long-form, the government is scrapping an important tool of nation-building and a key opportunity to enhance attachment and identity. This is never a good thing as Canadians continue to wrestle with who we are as a nation and a people, but it bears particular significance as the 2011 census will be the last decennial enumeration before Canada's sesquicentennial in 2017.

We respectfully urge your government to reverse forthwith its decision and restore the mandatory long-form to the 2011 census.

With warm wishes,



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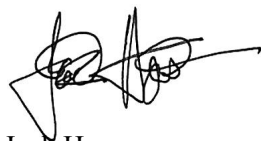
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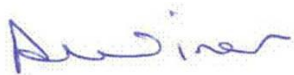
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