

## **RE-ESTABLISHING THE MANDATORY LONG FORM CENSUS**

**WHEREAS** the Canadian government has eliminated the Mandatory Long Form Census in a short period of time, with limited testing, and with little or no consultation with stakeholders;

**AND WHEREAS** the Mandatory Long Form Census contributes to robust and comprehensive data that can be used in evidence-based policy making, service planning, and business planning;

**AND WHEREAS** a Voluntary National Household Survey will have a higher and more variable sampling error than would have been achieved with a Mandatory Long Form Census as well as a high likelihood of significant non-response bias;

**AND WHEREAS** Statistics Canada takes the protection of privacy extremely seriously, and Section 17 of the Statistics Act legislates the confidentiality of this data:

**THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED** that BCLA urges the Government of Canada to take the advice of the National Statistics Council to:

Reinstate the Mandatory Long Form in the 2011 Census, and

Engage in a thorough and public review of the Mandatory Long Form for the 2016 Census to ensure that the appropriate questions are being asked and that the Census is the best place to be asking these questions;

**AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that BCLA continue to work with other library associations, nationally and regionally, to advocate for the reinstatement of the Mandatory Long Form Census.

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## **BACKGROUND**

In June of 2010, the Federal Government eliminated the Mandatory Long Form Census without consultation with its own expert staff at Statistics Canada, industrial professionals, academic researchers, organizations that make use of this data or the general public. Canada's Chief Statistician Munir Sheikh subsequently resigned over this decision. Citing concerns expressed by some Canadians over privacy and coercion, the Government indicated they would proceed with a voluntary National Household Survey in its place. Since 2011 is a Census year, it is imperative that the government be urged to reconsider the elimination of the Mandatory Long Form Census.

datalibre.ca lists almost 500 organizations that have voiced their opposition to the replacement of the mandatory long-form census with a voluntary National Household Survey. These organizations include the provincial governments of Quebec, Ontario, New Brunswick and PEI; City of Toronto; Canadian Labour Congress, Canadian Medical Association, United Way of Canada, Canadian Public Health Association, Toronto Board of Trade, Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops, and the Canadian Jewish Congress, to name a few.

Submitted by the BCLA Information Policy Committee.

## **ACTION IF ENDORSED**

BCLA to convey this resolution to the Minister of Industry, the Prime Minister, the Leader of the Opposition, and the Chair of the National Statistics Council.

BCLA Information Policy Committee to draft a follow-up letter for BCLA President/Executive review and signature. IPC will encourage individual librarians to contact their MPs and write their own letters to the Minister. IPC will continue to communicate and update members on this issue through the BCLA list and BCLA Browser.