



June 2018

My dear friends,

I wish to draw your attention to a deeply troubling issue that has negatively impacted the charitable activities of thousands of groups across the country, including dozens in our archdiocese. In late 2017, the federal government revised its application requirements for the 2018 Canada Summer Jobs program, forcing all applicants to indicate support for a clause that promotes values that go against our faith, such as abortion, in order to be considered. We cannot comply with this unjust requirement.

Many groups formally protested the change by applying for the grants but refusing to check the box associated with the offending statement, knowing their applications would be rejected but ensuring their concerns were registered. Hundreds of other groups were so discouraged they did not even apply.

In the Archdiocese of Toronto alone, at least 150 summer jobs have been jeopardized by the new application requirements. A summer camp for deaf children, employment for developmentally challenged young people, students cutting grass or helping with gardening, people welcoming newcomers to our country – these important community services will be most impacted.

Faith communities across the country (and politicians from all parties) have condemned the new requirement, including the Canadian Council of Imams, the Rabbinical Council of America, the Evangelical Fellowship of Canada and the Canadian Council of Christian Charities. We should all take note when a government claims to value the contributions of faith communities but requires them to profess a set of values which is against their faith in order to be eligible for government funding.

The government must abide by the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms* in its treatment of law-abiding individuals and groups. The fundamental freedoms of conscience and religion, thought, belief, opinion and expression, as guaranteed in the *Charter*, must be respected and affirmed in legislation, regulations and policy.

Many parishes in the archdiocese are holding collections to support the local groups denied funding this year. I encourage you to donate through your parish or online at: bit.ly/donatesummerjobs. More importantly, I invite everyone to visit www.savesummerjobs.ca so you can send a letter directly to your local MP, expressing your deep concern. Respectful communication regarding this unjust policy is very important. The process should take no more than three minutes.

As we continue to pray for all those elected to political office, be assured of my gratitude for all that you do to preserve and sustain the faith. St. Michael the Archangel, patron saint of the Archdiocese of Toronto, pray for us.

Sincerely in Christ,

† Thomas Card. Collins

Thomas Cardinal Collins
Archbishop of Toronto