



The Association of Canadian Archivists statement on the private member's bill, Bill C-626, An Act to amend the Statistics Act (appointment of Chief Statistician and long-form census)

The Association of Canadian Archivists' (ACA) supports Bill C-626, An Act to amend the Statistics Act (appointment of Chief Statistician and long-form census). This private member's bill, as put forward by Ted Hsu, Member of Parliament for the riding of Kingston and the Islands, amends the Statistics Act to provide for a long-form questionnaire to be used for taking the census of population.

The ACA, representing over 600 archivists in Canada, strongly supports the reinstatement of the long - form census. ACA members serve a large number of different research communities which include, but are not limited to, academics, government ministries at all levels, and genealogists. Each research group depends on robust census data. In 2011, the ACA advocated against the elimination of the long-form census and its replacement with the voluntary National Household Survey (NHS). We believe that the long-form was an essential tool in understanding Canadian society, now and well into the future. The response rate for the 2011 NHS was only 68.6% compared to approximately 95% for the last mandatory long-form census in 2006. This reduced response rate has called into question the validity of the data. Further, it has also weakened our ability to study and understand the make-up, the needs, and the changing of nature Canadian society.

Moreover, once Bill C-626 is passed, the ACA hopes that Parliamentarians will reconsider the opt-in, informed consent clause of the census. Since the 2006 census, all participants must opt-in to have their responses made public after 92 years. Only 56% of respondents to the 2006 census consented to do this –thereby rendering the census useless to future generations of historians and genealogists. Archivists oppose any census consent clause, but if forced to accept one, the ACA prefers an "opt-out" clause. Instead of being held liable for penalties under Section 31 of the Act, Canadians who do not want to make their information publically available after 92 years can opt out while those who want their census information to be accessible as a part of Canada's history can do so.

The ACA urges all stakeholders to contact their MP and encourage them to support Bill C-626 and the reinstatement of the long-form census.

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