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## 150+ Catholic groups sign Trudeau's pro-abortion pledge, some retract

TORONTO, May 21, 2018 (LifeSiteNews) — When Justin Trudeau's Liberal government brought in a pro-abortion attestation requirement for Canada Summer Jobs grants, Canada's Catholic bishops were quick to collectively and individually condemn the move.

The Canadian Catholic Conference of Bishops denounced the attestation as “unacceptable,” as did individual bishops, and Cardinal Thomas Collins of Toronto and Archbishop Terrence Prendergast of Ottawa were notably clear Catholics could not sign it.

“We cannot affirm that we support a (non-existent) right to abortion, which is what the euphemism ‘reproductive rights’ means,” wrote Prendergast in January in the Ottawa Sun.

“We didn’t start this controversy,” Collins told Vatican Radio in February. “We’re trying to be cooperative, but we cannot check off the box.”

But despite this, at least 157 identifiably Catholic groups have done just that, according to the database of Canada Summer Job grant recipients for 2018, available online for some weeks.

Of these, the majority — 107, or 68 percent — are parishes, but charities, school boards, religious orders, hospitals, a day care, and care homes are also listed. (For complete LifeSiteNews list, go [here](#).)

Most of the groups are from Quebec (45) and Atlantic Canada (73).

Given Service Canada’s scrupulosity in enforcing the new requirement — figures tabled last week in the House of Commons show 1,559 groups of 42,780 applicants were rejected over “attestation” issues — and absent any evidence to the contrary, it must be concluded the groups signed the attestation.

## **Give back the money, say bishops**

At least three bishops have asked Catholic groups pointblank to return the funds since the Canada Summer Job database has gone public, the Catholic Register reported last week.

They are Bishop Brian Dunn of Antigonish, Nova Scotia, Bishop Anthony Daniels of Grand Falls, Newfoundland, and Bishop Stephen Chmilar of the Ukrainian Catholic Eparchy of Toronto Eastern Canada.

“Parishes and other Catholic entities cannot make this attestation without contradicting our Right to Life stance,” Daniels wrote in a statement to parishes.

It is “incumbent” on parishes recently approved “to return the Notice of Approval with a brief note stating that the Attestation was made in error and the application must be withdrawn.”

It appears his directive was heeded by the six Grand Falls parishes initially listed on the database.

They have now disappeared, but not, unfortunately, before a pro-abortion blogger gleefully displayed a screenshot of their names, with the derisive comment: “Make up you mind, guys.”

## **We're keeping the money, say some**

LifeSiteNews contacted the groups to ask if the attestation was signed in error, and if the grants would be cancelled.

Four wrote back to say, either ruefully, neutrally, or adamantly that they were keeping the money.

Bertin LeBlanc wrote that the parish council of Sainte-Marie from Sainte-Marie-de-Kent, in the diocese of Moncton, knew of the “requirements as far as the respect of reproductive rights” and “unanimously accepted to sign the application for a summer job.”

A representative in the neighboring Ste. Anne-de-Kent parish wrote she checked off the attestation without paying attention. The priest was “very upset” about the attestation but “we need summer jobs help and money therefore we will accept the money.”

However, Moncton's Archbishop Valéry Vienneau told LifeSiteNews that following a meeting with his priests Thursday, he's directing parishes to cancel the grants.

“I sent a memo saying we're asking all parishes to refuse the money, and I'm asking them to make known to their parishioners why, the reason for the refusal, and also to alleviate the situation, to possibly encourage organizations to raise funds for some projects for the young people,” he said.

“I feel it is terrible the way the government has come up with this idea of putting those clauses in there,” Vienneau added. “They're promoting their own ideology and why should we have to submit to the government's ideology?”

Fr. Michel Bouchard of Sainte-Rose-de-Lima in Laval, Quebec, said the parish applied before knowing about the attestation. Since the “students are already involved” in a bazaar project and “we are committed to them,” they are keeping the grants.

“If the clause is maintained next year, we will not ask for funding,” he added.

St. Joseph's Supper Table, based in St. Joseph's Parish in Ottawa, applied for the grants at the urging of their Liberal MP Mona Fortier, wrote manager Andrew Pump.

The parish's Women's Center was rejected but not the Supper Table, and since it is “a meal program we felt that the issue about the attestation wasn't relevant to our ministry of feeding the poor and our need for funds to do this,” he told LifeSiteNews in an email.

“We did, however, register our concern with our MP about the wording of the attestation.”

Ottawa's Archbishop Prendergast was travelling and unable to comment, spokesperson Sr. Monique Bisson told LifeSiteNews.

## **We're giving back the money, say others**

To date, 30 Catholic groups told LifeSiteNews they are cancelling the grants.

These include: three Quebec parishes, seven Atlantic Canada parishes, Catholic Family Services and Catholic Crosscultural Services in Toronto, St Boniface Hospital and St. Boniface Cathedral Parish in Winnipeg, Covenant Health in Alberta, Catholic Family Services in Regina, the French Catholic School boards MonAvenir in Toronto, and Grande Rivières in Timmins, School Sisters of Notre Dame in Waterdown, La Storta Jesuits in Pickering, and the Waterloo Catholic District School Board (WCDSB).

The Waterloo Catholic District School Board objected to the attestation in a February letter to the ministry, wrote WCDSB managing officer John Shewchuk. "The Board being listed on the website appears to be some sort of clerical error" and it has "contacted the government to rectify the situation," he added.

"We uphold Catholic values and have withdrawn our application for the Canada Summer Jobs Program," wrote Donna Harris, senior communications advisor for Catholic Children's Aid Society of Toronto.

"Catholic Crosscultural Services is not accepting any summer jobs funding from Service Canada this year," wrote Ramya Ramanathan, marketing and communications manager.

"As a Catholic school board, we remain supportive of Cardinal Collins' position and have taken appropriate measures in this regard," wrote Mikale-Andrée Joly, director of corporate relations for Conseil Scolaire Catholique MonAvenir, Toronto.

"Because we definitely want to respect the values of our board, we are not accepting the grants," noted Richard Loiselle, communication director for Conseil Scolaire de District des Grandes Rivières Catholic School Board in Timmins.

As for Catholic Family Services and Camp Monahan in Regina, “a lack of clear communication between the Archdiocese of Regina and Catholic organizations resulted in two organizations in the archdiocese agreeing to the attestation, and being awarded summer job grants,” wrote Archbishop Donald Bolen in a statement to LifeSiteNews.

“Boards of many Catholic organizations function autonomously, even while being guided by Catholic values. Both have subsequently made the decision to turn down the grants. We as an Archdiocese support their efforts to find funding through other means,” he noted.

“With Catholics throughout the country, I am opposed to the attestation required in this year’s Summer grant application, because it links ideological support for abortion with funding for student summer jobs,” wrote Bolen.

## **Attestation signed as an oversight**

A number of groups said they signed the attestation as an oversight, or in the expectation that the Liberals would drop the requirement.

“Most certainly the attestation box was, *checked in error!* The grant will definitely NOT be accepted. Bishop Steven Chmilar’s statement clarified that we will not support the government ideology on this issue!” wrote Fr. Peter Bodnar of St. Mary’s Ukrainian Catholic Development Corporation, Sudbury.

“Our application for the grant was an oversight on our part and will be withdrawn immediately. We will not accept the funding,” stated Fr. Paul MacNeil of Our Lady of the Scapular Parish in Niagara Falls.

“I was expecting the government to change its unacceptable request. Since they persist, I am sending a notice that we do not accept the CSJ funding and the unsupportable requirements for funding,” wrote Father Louis-Joseph Boudreau, c.s.c., of Paroisse Ste-Thérèse d’Avila, Cap-Pelé, New Brunswick.

“It was our hope that this issue would be resolved by the federal government by the time that the grants were awarded. Unfortunately, that has not happened and we have therefore declined the grant. The grass will be tall at Stella Maris Parish this summer,” stated Murdock MacPherson from Creignish, Nova Scotia.

“No, we will not be taking the funding and my feelings are that this is ridiculous – Thought he was a better man,” wrote Sheila Pelly, from St. Peter’s Parish in Antigonish.

## **Groups that could not or would not respond**

The majority of the groups did not respond to LifeSiteNews, or faced obstacles to doing so.

Marianne Baril of Conseil Scolaire Catholique Providence, French Catholic school board in the London diocese, said board policy required an access to information request to respond.

London Bishop Ronald Fabbro issued a letter in February telling the lay faithful that “we need to take a stand against the position of the Government of Canada, and say that we will not be bullied into even the appearance of collusion on this issue.”

He had “decided, therefore, that we, as the people of the Diocese of London, not make application or accept any monies from the CSJG program,” wrote Fabbro.

Fabbro’s spokesman Nelson Couto said in an email that the French Catholic school board, “while one of our partners in Catholic Education, operates with autonomy. Please contact them directly with your request for information.”

The St. Demetrius Ukrainian Catholic Development Corporation board would be discussing the grants in a board meeting this coming week, a spokesperson told LifeSiteNews.

Other Catholic groups approved include: St. Joseph’s Hospital in Comox, B.C., Society of St. Vincent de Paul, Vancouver; Society of St. Vincent de Paul, Sarnia and Kent, Ontario; St. Joseph’s General Hospital, Elliot Lake, Ontario; St. Francis Xavier University, Students’ Union and Board of Governors, Nova Scotia; Catholic Health Partners Miramichi, New Brunswick; Catholic diocese of Baie Comeau, Quebec; Catholic School Foundation of Corner Brook, Newfoundland.

