

The Honourable Navdeep Bains

Minister of Innovation, Science, and Economic Development
C.D. Howe Building
235 Queen Street
Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0H5

The Honourable David Lametti

Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada
284 Wellington Street
Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0H8

January 25, 2019

Dear Ministers Bains and Lametti:

In July 2011, Statistics Canada published marriage and divorce rates for the last time despite having collected critical data on marriage rates since 1921 and divorce rates since 1972. The last data were actually collected in 2008, leaving a decade-long gap in this vital area. While the provinces continue to track this data, there is currently no federal body that collects and disseminates these vital statistics from the provinces. The collection of this data was a joint enterprise between Statistics Canada and the Department of Justice.

The collection of marriage and divorce rates is critical to ensuring the accurate study and understanding of domestic social policy, from education to elder care, in our nation.

Furthermore, these statistics are essential when calculating how Canada compares in its psycho-social and socio-political evolution to other nations. By tracking marriage and divorce statistics, we better understand our culture and communities with regard to issues of public concern and academic research, such as social isolation, poverty reduction, demographics, and the presence or lack of support networks, among others.

The reinstatement of the collection of marriage and divorce rates in a timely fashion would help overcome the significant gap that now exists. Academics, researchers, civil servants, politicians, and policy makers could continue important studies. Back in 2011, the cost of collecting this data was estimated to be only \$250,000.

Finance Minister Bill Morneau put it well in his 2016 budget speech when he said:

Good policy is impossible without good data. If we are to lift children out of poverty, we must first understand the cause. If we are to provide quality health care for seniors, we must know how many seniors there are and what services they need. If we want to protect minority languages, we need to know where they are spoken.

Literally, nothing that governments do can be done well without good data. That's why, led by my colleague the Minister of Innovation, Science, and Economic Development, our government wasted no time in bringing back the long-form census.

Today, we want to affirm this laudable commitment to openness, transparency, and the role that good statistics play in evidence-based policy-making.

As such, we are asking you to reinstate the collection of marriage and divorce rates at the federal level.

Some of us are signing as individuals, others as representatives of an institution or association. It is important to note that signatories are not affiliated with each other. We are driven only by the desire to see policy in Canada continuously undergirded by good data.

We look forward to working with you in common cause.

Sincerely,

Marina Adshade, PhD, Economics, Vancouver School of Economics, University of British Columbia

Douglas Allen, PhD, Economics, Simon Fraser University

Sarah R. Brauner-Otto, PhD, Director, Centre on Population Dynamics

Diane W. Bederman, author, member of Leading Women for Shared Parenting

Ian Brodie, PhD, Political Science, University of Calgary

Rabbi Dr. Reuven P. Bulka, CM, Rabbi Emeritus, Congregation Machzikei Hadas

Philip Cross, Munk Senior Fellow, Macdonald-Laurier Institute

Dr. Roy Eappen, MDCM, FRCPC, FACP

Janice Fiamengo, PhD, English, University of Ottawa

Adam Galovan, PhD, Human Ecology, University of Alberta

Stephen Gordon, PhD, Economics, Université Laval

Dana Hamplová, PhD, Sociology, Czech Academy of Sciences

Dr. Will Johnston, Department of Family Practice, University of British Columbia

Dr. Timothy Lau, MD, FRCPC, MS, Geriatric Psychiatrist, Royal Ottawa Hospital

Céline Le Bourdais, PhD, Distinguished James McGill Professor of Sociology

Shuvaloy Majumdar, Munk Senior Fellow, Macdonald-Laurier Institute

Todd Martin, PhD, Sociology, Trinity Western University

Susan Martinuk, columnist and researcher

Elizabeth May, OC, Member of Parliament, Saanich-Gulf Islands

James McIntosh, PhD, Economics, Concordia University

Moira McQueen, PhD, Theology, St. Michael's Graduate Faculty of Theology, University of Toronto

Paul Millar, PhD, School of Criminology and Criminal Justice, Nipissing University

Kevin Milligan, PhD, Economics, Vancouver School of Economics, University of British Columbia

Lydia Miljan, PhD, Political Science, University of Windsor
Mark Milke, PhD and public policy analyst
Jack Mintz, PhD, President's Fellow, School of Public Policy, University of Calgary
Andrea Mrozek, Program Director, Cardus Family
Geranda Notten, PhD, Comparative Public Policy, University of Ottawa
W. Craig Riddell, PhD, Economics, Vancouver School of Economics, University of British Columbia
John Robson, PhD, Columnist, *National Post*
Chris Sarlo, PhD, Economics, Nipissing University
Libby Simon, MSW, Child & Family Services and the Child Guidance Clinic, Winnipeg (retired)
Rev. Doug Ward, Pastor, Kanata Baptist Church
Margaret Wentz, Columnist, *Globe and Mail*
W. Bradford Wilcox, PhD, Sociology, University of Virginia

cc: The Honourable Jean-Yves Duclos

Minister of Families, Children, and Social Development