



February 28, 2025

The Honourable Dominic LeBlanc, PC, MP  
Minister of Finance and Intergovernmental Affairs  
Department of Finance Canada  
90 Elgin Street  
Ottawa, ON K1A 0G5

**Re: Advancement of Religion as a Charitable Purpose**

Dear Minister LeBlanc,

As leaders of religious charities and not-for-profit organizations from a variety of faith traditions, we are very concerned about the recommendation in the Finance Committee's pre-budget report to remove the advancement of religion as a charitable purpose. Recommendation 430 states, "Amend the *Income Tax Act* to provide a definition of a charity which would remove the privileged status of 'advancement of religion' as a charitable purpose."

The Canadian Interfaith Conversation advocates for religion in a pluralistic society and in Canadian public life. We want to promote harmony and religious insight among religions and religious communities in Canada, strengthen our society's moral foundations, and work for greater realization of the fundamental freedom of conscience and religion for the sake of the common good and an engaged citizenship.

Religious charities play a significant role within the charitable sector and the life of our country. Of the more than 86,000 charitable organizations registered with the CRA, more than 30,000 fall under the advancement of religion.

The advancement of religion, far from being a privilege, has been affirmed in common law as a charitable purpose for centuries. Religion is acknowledged to form in people a moral and ethical framework which contributes to the building of social capital and social cohesion. Data from Statistics Canada confirms that Canadians who are religiously active are more likely than other Canadians donate, to give more when they give, and to volunteer, and contribute significantly to non-religious charities.

Religious charities benefit their religious adherents, their communities and Canadian society. Although their core purpose is worship and advancement of religion, religious communities offer pastoral, social, and physical support. All world religions teach people to care for their neighbours. This outward expression of care and concern flow from their religious beliefs and identity. The impetus to reach out in compassionate ways and to care for those who are vulnerable is evident in many religious traditions.

As Christian, Jewish and Muslim faith leaders stated in a June 14 2016 Interfaith Statement on Palliative Care, “Our traditions instruct that there is meaning and purpose in supporting people at the end of life. Visiting those who are sick, and caring for those who are dying, are core tenets of our respective faiths and reflect our shared values as Canadians.”

Or the 80 religious leaders who raised their collective voices to highlight the necessity for greater attention to the needs of the homeless, the incarcerated, the elderly and those already suffering from social isolation at the outset of the COVID-19 pandemic on March 28 2020.<sup>1</sup>

We urge you not to follow the recommendation of the Finance Committee, but instead to recognize the relevance and benefits of religion to the charitable sector and Canadian public life. The Canadian Interfaith Conversation would welcome the opportunity to discuss with you and your staff the benefits of charitable status to our communities and to Canadian society.

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<sup>1</sup><https://www.interfaithconversation.ca/sites/default/files/Hope%2C%20Gratitude%20and%20Solidarity%20%28March%202020%29.pdf>).

Please be assured that faith communities across Canada pray regularly for your well-being and for your work toward a more just and fair Canada.

Sincerely,



Peter Noteboom  
Co-Chair



Shaila Carter  
Co-Chair

Canadian Interfaith Conversation

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