

NIKI ASHTON

MP - Churchill



Thompson Office

83 Churchill Drive, Suite 307
Thompson, Manitoba R8N 0L6
Phone: (204) 677-1333
Fax: (204) 677-1339

The Pas Office

P.O. Box 2820 - 1416 Gordon Avenue
The Pas, Manitoba R9A 1M6
Phone: (204) 627-8716
Fax.: (204) 627-8717
Toll free: (866) 785-0522

Ottawa Office

263 Confederation Building
House of Commons
Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0A6
Phone: (613) 992-3018
Fax: (613) 996-5817
Website: nikiashton.ndp.ca
Email: niki.ashton@parl.gc.ca

Canadian Library Association,

1150 Morrison Drive, Suite 400, Ottawa K2H 8S9

January 26, 2015

Dear Valoree,

Thank you for taking the time to write to me about Bill C-626, Ted Hsu's bill to re-instate the mandatory long-form census. I agree that the mandatory long-form census is essential to government policy-making, social science and humanities research, and provincial and municipal planning, among other valuable uses. New Democrats have been very supportive of Statistics Canada, including putting forward our own bill in 2011 that also called for the reinstatement of the mandatory, long-form census.

Leading up to our 2011 bill, New Democrats were very vocal in our defense of Statistics Canada and the long-form census. Before the census was eliminated in 2010, we fought tooth and nail to prevent its elimination. Later, our MP for London – Fanshawe, Irene Mathysen, successfully fought to study the impact of the cancellation of the mandatory long-form census in committee, also in 2010. Ms. Mathysen introduced a motion in 2011 calling on the House and the Government to re-instate the long-form census in accordance with the 2006 census.

In 2011, our MP for Windsor West, Brian Masse, tabled a bill that is strikingly similar to Mr. Hsu's current bill, Bill C-346. For example, Mr. Masse's bill was the first to call for a search committee for the Chief Statistician. It also contained important measures to decrease the amount of Ministerial interference that Mr. Hsu's bill does not contain. Mr. Masse's bill set a higher threshold for the number of households sampled in the mandatory census, and contained a provision to ensure that future censuses are comparable over time. Mr. Hsu's bill calls for neither of these two important changes.

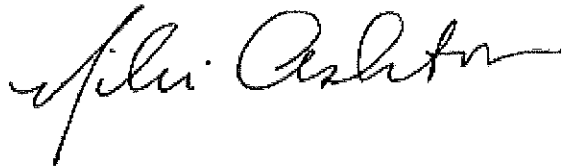
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Despite these problems with Mr. Hsu's bill, my colleagues and I will be supporting Bill C-626. Our Official Opposition Industry Critic, Peggy Nash (MP for Parkdale –High Park) is keeping a very close eye on this bill, as well as all developments relating to Statistics Canada.

Thank you again for taking the time to write to me on this important issue.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Niki Ashton". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Niki Ashton
MP for Churchill