



Colour of Poverty

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Open Letter to Prime Minister on Racial and Gender Equality in the Senate of Canada

December 29, 2015

The Right Honourable Justin Trudeau, P.C., M.P.
Prime Minister of Canada
House of Commons
Ottawa Ontario K1A0A6

Dear Prime Minister Trudeau,

We commend you on your statements with respect to gender equality in your cabinet as well as fairness and equality of opportunity for Indigenous peoples of Canada through implementing all the recommendations of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission.

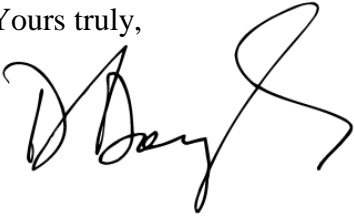
In light of these positive expressions in favour of equality, we ask that adequate Aboriginal and racial and ethnic representation are included in your plans to achieve gender balance through the planned new non-partisan, merit-based process for Senate appointments.

Colour of Poverty /Colour of Change Network (COP-COC) is an Ontario-wide initiative made up of individuals, groups and organizations working to build community-based capacity to address the growing racialization of poverty and the resulting experience of increased levels of social exclusion and marginalization of racialized communities across Ontario. COPC works to build concrete strategies and develop tools, and community-based capacity through which individuals, groups and organizations can work together to address and redress the growing structural and systemic ethno-racial inequality across the province.

Indigenous peoples and racialized people account for approximately 25% of Canada's population. They are under-represented in virtually every level of leadership in Canada, but particularly so in the Senate. They are over-represented among those living in poverty in Canada, but their experiences and voices are often absent in governing and policy decisions made by Parliament and the Senate.

We are encouraged that your Senate nominees selection criteria names priority consideration of those who represent Aboriginal peoples and linguistic, minority and ethnic communities, in addition to other factors. We ask that these considerations are foremost in the final selection and future appointments to the Senate. With your leadership, Canada can achieve racial as well as gender balance in the governance of the country.

Yours truly,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'D. Bay', written in a cursive style.

Steering Committee Member
Colour of Poverty Campaign

On behalf of COPC Steering Committee:

Access Alliance Multicultural Health & Community Services
African Canadian Legal Clinic
Canadian Arab Federation
Chinese Canadian National Council Toronto Chapter
Council of Agencies Serving South Asians
Hispanic Development Council
Karuna Community Services
Mennonite New Life Centre of Toronto
Metro Toronto Chinese & South East Asian Legal Clinic
Midaynta Community Services
Ontario Council of Agencies Serving Immigrants
La Passerelle – I.D.E.
South Asian Legal Clinic of Ontario
Thorncliffe Neighbourhood Office
Professor Grace-Edward Galabuzi (Ryerson University)