



Forest Hills Baptist Church
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To Whom it may Concern:

For many years, Forest Hills Baptist Church has applied for, and received, funding from the Federal Government for purposes of providing summer employment opportunities for youth within our church. Through summer employment, these young people have the wonderful opportunity to work directly within our local community in many different ways along with our staff, while at the same time they gain and develop important skills, particularly in the areas of communication, planning and preparation, education, teaching, and leadership, to name but a few. As a church we believe strongly in the importance of our youth, their abilities and talents, and the positive role they play in our local community, our city, our Province, and ultimately our Country.

Once again Forest Hills Baptist Church is interested in applying for federal funding to support summer employment. This year, there has been a slight change to the application procedure with the addition of a modification to the attestation that is part of the application. Much has been made of this modification in the media, and many opinions and commentaries have been made by many parties with regard to this matter. The attestation in the present application is set out below:

Attestation:

- I have read and understood the Canada Summer Jobs Articles of Agreement and referred to the Applicant Guide as needed;
- The job would not be created without the financial assistance provided under a potential contribution agreement;
- Both the job and my organization's core mandate respect individual human rights in Canada including the values underlying the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms* as well as other rights. These include reproductive rights and the right to be free from discrimination on the basis of sex, religion, race, national or ethnic origin, colour, mental or physical disability or sexual orientation, or gender identity or expression;
- I have all the necessary authorities, permissions or approvals to submit this application on behalf of myself and the organization.

As the attestation reads at the third bullet, there must be the utmost of respect for the rule of law and recognition of the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*. In addition, recognition of fundamental human rights is also to be acknowledged and respected. To be clear, Forest Hills Baptist Church shares this position and fully supports same.

Unfortunately, the debate over this attestation seems to have become solely focused on the issue of abortion, so as to require that any organization or entity seeking summer employment funding must confirm that the decision of a woman to terminate a pregnancy is *right* and that any other viewpoint is *wrong*. Although highly publicized, this position does not seem to be reflected in the attestation itself.

Forest Hills Baptist Church does not dispute that a woman has the legal right to abort her pregnancy. The law is clear in this regard, women in Canada are afforded reproductive rights and if any woman makes the decision to abort her pregnancy rather than to carry on to full-term and deliver her child, she has the right to choose this avenue. Forest Hills Baptist Church acknowledges and respects the law and Forest Hills Baptist Church will not stand in judgment of any woman who has made this very difficult decision. As a church body, Forest Hills Baptist Church agrees that any woman has the right to make this choice. However, we will not agree nor confirm that this decision is the *right* decision and we would encourage any woman going through pregnancy to look at alternative solutions rather than abortion. If, however, a woman chooses abortion, Forest Hills Baptist Church will not condemn or stand in judgment of her, but will instead seek to provide any assistance, support, or guidance she may need.

Accordingly, this application is being submitted in the hope that, as in previous years, youth from our community may find employment with our church. Forest Hills Baptist Church acknowledges and respects the rule of law and certainly the values that are clearly set out under our great country's *Charter of Rights and Freedoms*. Forest Hills Baptist Church is certainly willing to attest to this. However, if the Government of Canada requires Forest Hills Baptist Church to attest that a woman's decision to abort her pregnancy is the *right* decision, this is something we cannot do. Given the apparent difference between the attestation set out in the application and the various reports, stories, and commentaries as circulated through the media in this regard about what the attestation means, Forest Hills Baptist Church cannot sign the attestation.

Should funding be granted to Forest Hills Baptist Church for summer student employment, the church will be thankful for the acknowledgement that the funding provided will be used to provide a tremendous opportunity for our youth and also to assist and support our local community. If funding is not granted this year, the church is still thankful for the opportunity to apply and will continue to do great things, God willing, through our youth for our local community.

Thank-you for your consideration of this application.



January 31, 2018

Mr. Peter Trott (Chair of Deacons Board)