

LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION



CHEF DE L'OPPOSITION

June 10, 2005

Jean Malavoy
National Director
Canadian Conference of the Arts
804-130 Albert Street
Ottawa, ON K1P 5G4

Dear Mr. Malavoy:

Thank you for your letter regarding the Tomorrow Starts Today (TST) program. I am pleased to have this opportunity to address your concerns and affirm the Conservative Party's support for arts, culture and the diverse heritage of Canada.

Last year, great advocacy efforts were made to gain unanimous support from all of Canada's federal political parties for the renewal and extension of TST. Bev Oda, the Heritage Critic for the Conservative Party of Canada and also a member of the Standing Committee on Canadian Heritage, made a motion asking the Heritage Minister, Liza Frulla, to indicate to the cultural community the department's intentions to renew "Tomorrow Starts Today" before the Christmas break. In a matter of days, Ms. Frulla signaled their intent.

The Conservative Party does not believe it is reasonable to keep the entire cultural community in limbo when planning for funding for the upcoming year or years. We have clearly stated it would be our intention to eliminate the tortuous process of having to lobby government for sustainable funding for the arts annually. If there is an established need for these programs, permanent funding for them should be earmarked by the government.

The Conservative Party *Policy Declaration*, adopted at our policy convention in Montreal, Section 93 entitled Arts and Culture reads as follows.

- i) The Conservative Party supports arts, culture and the diverse heritage of Canada. Recognition that language is an integral part of one's culture and heritage should form the basis for decision making relating to its cultural and artistic community. While recognizing Canada's diverse culture and shared history, the Conservative Party will work to strengthen opportunities and accessibility in both the domestic and international markets for our creative works.

- ii) The Conservative Party believes that government support should be linked to accountability, transparency and sustainability. A review of programs and policies will ensure that they effectively meet their objectives, are based on merit, and remove political involvement from the process. Arts, culture and heritage make a substantial contribution to Canadian society and in a positive way, affect the quality of life of many Canadians. A Conservative government will, through the tax system and other means, support charitable giving by individuals and corporations to the arts and cultural community in order that its work can be expanded.

We pledge to change the Liberal record of continual subsidies and hand-outs in favour of a new vision. All Canadians can have confidence that we value the arts, culture and heritage of every community and region across this land; we can do it – starting with strong policies, cultural programs and initiatives. We will not only encourage creativity with stable funding, but open new doors for long term growth and opportunity. Canadians will see that we do not regard arts and culture as a luxury, but as an integral part of Canada's economy, recognizing it contributes \$26 billion to our GDP and employs over 570,000 Canadians. We know that supporting arts and culture with a new vision will show that Conservatives know what Canadians value.

The Conservative Party looks forward to working with you to achieve these goals.

Sincerely,

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

Hon. Stephen Harper, P.C., M.P.
Leader of the Opposition
Leader of the Conservative Party of Canada
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