

Minister Responsible for
Statistics Canada



Ministre responsable de
Statistique Canada

Ottawa, Canada K1A 0T6

AUG 21 2006

The Honourable Bryon Wilfert, P.C., M.P.
Room 313, Justice Building
House of Commons
Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0A6

Dear Colleague:

Thank you for your letters of June 3, 2006, informing me of the concerns of your constituents regarding the length and detail of the 2006 Census.

Although I understand the concerns of your constituents about supplying what they view as personal information, I can assure you that all of the information collected by the census is needed and is used only for statistical purposes. Statistics Canada takes very seriously its legal obligation to protect the privacy and confidentiality of every census respondent. In fact, all census databases, facilities, and networks containing confidential data are physically isolated from any networks outside Statistics Canada. In addition, names, addresses and telephone numbers are not included in the census dissemination database to protect the privacy of census respondents.

Determining the questions to be asked in the census is a delicate balancing act that takes into account the diversity of interests and views that exist among our population. All of the questions are designed to meet important information requirements that would be extremely difficult to satisfy efficiently from other sources. In fact, every question goes through a rigorous consultation, testing, review and approval process, including that by Cabinet.

Most of the questions that appeared on the 2006 Census long form have appeared on many censuses. These questions continue to be essential for providing the information needed by governments, businesses, researchers and individual Canadians to shed light on issues of concern to all of us – employment, education, training, transportation, housing, immigration, income support, pensions for seniors, transfer payments, aboriginal issues and many more.

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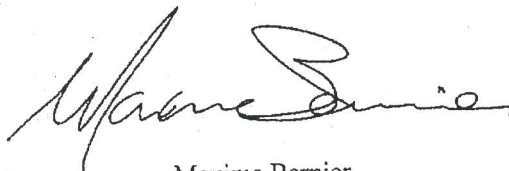
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- 2 -

A census questionnaire is seen only by those who have been sworn to secrecy under the *Statistics Act* and who actually need to see it. This represents a very limited number of employees. Absolutely no one except authorized Statistics Canada staff has access to individual questionnaires or information that would permit identification of any individual or family. Contractors never have access to census data. Therefore, even if a request were ever to be made by an external authority to any contractor for confidential data, it would be physically impossible for a contractor to comply, given that they are never in possession of census responses.

Thank you for taking the time to bring this matter to my attention.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Maxime Bernier". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "M" and "B".

Maxime Bernier