

## ISSUE

In summer of 2010, the federal government quietly sent out a press release announcing its decision to eliminate Statistics Canada's Long Form Census. To its surprise, hundreds of groups from business leaders, health care providers and community groups to academics, religious leaders and local and provincial governments spoke out in support of the Long Form Census.

## CONTEXT

What was all the fuss about? The Long Form Census was the gold standard for vital information about our neighbourhoods, cities and towns, provinces and territories, and country. It was chock-full of important information about us—our ethnocultural and racial diversity, our immigration history, our families and households, and our work, incomes and educational backgrounds. The Long Form Census provided a strong evidence base for making good decisions in business, health care, community service delivery, public policy and many other areas.

It was also a yardstick for measuring how we were doing over time. For example, we know Aboriginal communities, racialized groups, lone mother families and people with disabilities have higher rates of poverty than the population average. The Long Form Census allowed us to measure if things were getting better or worse over time and shine a spotlight on where attention was needed. The mandatory nature of the Long Form Census resulted in good quality data that we could rely on. It was also an essential tool for improving the quality of Statistics Canada's survey data.

Despite stiff opposition, the federal government cancelled the Long Form Census citing privacy concerns. It introduced the voluntary National Household Survey (NHS). But the NHS didn't fill the gap. In fact, it cost more money than the Long Form Census and resulted in poorer quality data.

Once again, groups across the country are calling for a return to the mandatory Long Form Census. It's good value for Canadians and essential for smart planning that benefits us all.

## QUESTIONS

- Will your party reinstate the Long Form Census?
- How will your party ensure that Canadians have access to high quality data to support sound policy-making?



## RESOURCES

For more information and additional fact sheets in this series: <http://spno.ca/canada-votes-2015>