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## Overreach Opportunities

By Philip Carl Salzman

The Government of Canada initiated a new ideological vetting of applicants for its summer job program for students. The organizations nominating students for summer grants, and the students and their parents, must declare that they conform to Government of Canada policy.<sup>1</sup> An unusual number of students have been rejected by the government.<sup>2</sup> Considerable adverse comment has arisen about this Government requirement.<sup>3</sup>

However, the Government of Canada in this initiative is following Parliamentary precedent. Members of Parliament are required to conform to their Parties' policies in their votes. Each Party has a Whip who insures, through discussion and pressure, that Party members vote the Party line. To vote otherwise would risk being excommunicated from the Party, and thus likely lose their seat in the next election.

If members of Parliament must conform to their Parties' ideologies, is it not entirely reasonable that more lowly members of society also be required to conform to the Government's ideology? If citizens wish to receive Government benefits, should they not demonstrate that their beliefs are correct?

The puzzling question is why the Government has been so lax in applying ideological vetting in its areas of responsibility. The Government hires many employees for the Public Service. It could easily vet job applicants and require an "attestation" of ideological purity from them. And is there any reason that ongoing employees should be allowed to go scot free? If Public Employees failed to commit to the attestation, could they not be terminated, or at least blocked from promotion?

I see no reason why the same principles should not be applied by Provincial Governments. The Governments of British Columbia and Quebec could demand attestation that the applicant or employee opposes all pipelines, while the Governments of Alberta and Saskatchewan could demand attestation that the applicant or employee supports all pipelines. The Government of Ontario could require attestation of support for alternative energy sources, such as solar panels and wind turbines, no matter how ineffectual and uneconomical. When the Parti Quebecois returns to power, it could require commitment to separatism, oops, I mean independence.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://globalnews.ca/news/3914528/canada-summer-jobs-anti-abortion-anti-gay-groups/>

<http://nationalpost.com/news/politics/government-clarifies-core-mandate-in-canada-summer-jobs-grant-but-attestation-remains-unchanged>

<https://www.canada.ca/en/employment-social-development/services/funding/canada-summer-jobs.html>

<sup>2</sup> [https://www.huffingtonpost.ca/2018/03/19/rejections-for-canada-summer-jobs-funding-skyrocket-after-liberals-change-criteria\\_a\\_23389948/](https://www.huffingtonpost.ca/2018/03/19/rejections-for-canada-summer-jobs-funding-skyrocket-after-liberals-change-criteria_a_23389948/)

<http://canoe.com/news/national/more-than-1500-applicants-rejected-canada-summer-jobs-funding-amid-values-test>

<sup>3</sup> <http://www.canadianlawyermag.com/author/barry-bussey/what-the-fuss-about-ticking-a-box-on-the-canada-summer-jobs-application-is-about-15341/>

<http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/newfoundland-labrador/scott-simms-abortion-clause-reproductive-rights-1.4498845>

<https://www.thestar.com/news/canada/2018/03/17/faith-based-groups-in-limbo-after-trudeau-governments-changes-to-summer-job-funding-applications.html>

<https://www.jccf.ca/news-release-small-business-sues-federal-government-over-canada-summer-jobs-attestation/>  
<http://www.chatelaine.com/opinion/justin-trudeau-pro-choice/>

Municipal Governments also have obligations that would require attestations of conformity by employees and occupants needing services. For example, they could require support for bicycles and dedicated bike lanes, or against bicycles and dedicated bike lanes. For the maintenance of surrounding green forest bands around the municipality that ban development and provide breathing room, or the modification of green bands on the grounds that they strangle housing development and raise house prices. For or against raising property taxes. For or against public housing.

After all, our Governments are elected by our citizens, and in our representative system of governing, Governments have a right to implement the policies they ran on, or thought up afterward. We elected our Governments. Is it not our obligation to bow to them?

#### About the Author



Philip Carl Salzman B.A. (Antioch), M.A., Ph.D. (Chicago) is Professor of Anthropology at McGill University, appointed in 1968. He founded the Commission on Nomadic Peoples of the International Union of Anthropological and Ethnological Sciences, and its international journal, *Nomadic Peoples*, for which he received the IUAES Gold Award. In recent years he has also served as Senior Fellow at the University of St. Andrews, Open Society International Scholar at the American University of Central Asia, Erasmus Mundus International Fellow at the University of Catania, and Visiting Professor at the University of Sydney. Extensive ethnographic field research in Baluchistan (Iran), Gujarat and Rajasthan (India), and Sardinia (Italy) provided the foundation many articles in academic journals, and for book publications such as *The Anthropology of Real Life: Events in Human Experience* (1999), *Black Tents of Baluchistan* (2000), winner of the Premio Pitr–Salomone Marino, *Understanding Culture: An Introduction of Anthropological Theory* (2001), *Pastoralists: Equality, Hierarchy, and the State* (2004), *Culture and Conflict in the Middle East* (2008), *Postcolonial Theory and the Arab-Israel Conflict* (2008), and *Thinking Anthropologically 3<sup>rd</sup> Ed.* (2010). His latest book publication is *Classic Comparative Anthropology: Studies from the Tradition* (2012). In public affairs, he was a member of Middle East Strategy at Harvard (2008-2010), a member of the Board of Directors of Scholars for Peace in the Middle East (2004-2012), and is currently a Senior Fellow at the Frontier Centre for Public Policy, a member of the Academic Council of the Canadian Institute for Jewish Studies, a Fellow of the Middle East Forum (2015-), and a member of the Board of Directors of Scholars for Peace in the Middle East (2016-). His articles have been published by the Frontier Centre, the Middle East Forum, the Gatestone Institute, the Canadian Institute for Jewish Research, the Macdonald Laurier Institute, and Areo Magazine.