



August 5, 2010

The Right Honourable Stephen Harper
80 Wellington Street
Ottawa ON K1A 0A2

Dear Prime Minister:

On behalf of Canada's largest private-sector union representing 250,000 members from coast to coast, I am writing to express grave concerns regarding recent comments made by the Hon. Stockwell Day, President of the Treasury Board, who insinuated that the Federal Employment Equity program is barring qualified Canadians from job opportunities in the federal public service.

UFCW Canada is equally dismayed by similar comments made by the Hon. Jason Kenney, Minister of Citizenship, Immigration and Multiculturalism, who stated that all Canadians should have an equal opportunity to work for their government based on merit, regardless of race or ethnicity, as if to suggest that unmerited candidates from racialized communities are taking over the jobs of qualified white candidates, thanks to the Federal Employment Equity measures.

The truth, as you are well aware, is the opposite. Employment equity guarantees merit-based hiring because it removes artificial barriers to employment. All too often, qualified candidates from racialized communities do not get hired *because* of their race or ethnicity.

Contrary to the Ministers' assertion, employment equity has proven to be an effective measure to ensure candidates from marginalized groups get the jobs that they are qualified to do. It also promotes diversity in the workplace, something that most Canadians value. I know the 250,000 members of UFCW Canada certainly do.

Mr. Prime Minister: I strongly urge you – on behalf of a very diverse union of working Canadians – to affirm the federal government's commitment to equity and diversity by strengthening employment equity measures, and by educating all Canadians about the need for such programs.

Sincerely,

Wayne E. Hanley
National President

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