

The Honourable Ted McMeekin  
Minister of Government and Consumer Services  
Minister's Office  
4th Floor, Suite 4320  
Whitney Block  
99 Wellesley Street West  
Toronto, ON M7A 1W3

Dear Minister,

I am writing on behalf of the Ottawa Chamber of Voluntary Organizations (OCVO) regarding the changes to the Corporations Act as it relates to registered charities and voluntary sector organizations, both incorporated and not. We would like to add several observations to the discussions underway.

OCVO, at the request of the Ministry, recently hosted a consultation on the pending changes for Ottawa-based organizations. The event was well attended, the presentations were informative and the discussion was rich. It was a great opportunity to bring the community together and the Chamber was delighted to assist in this manner. We were particularly appreciative of the respect shown our francophone colleagues and the provision of simultaneous translation. Many participants indicated that they would submit commentary. In addition, the Chamber itself would like to add to the commentary, based not only on our experiences of the day, but on our broad and intense involvement with the sector as a whole.

The intent of the consultation process is well appreciated and well intentioned, and credit should be given to the Ministry for proceeding in this matter. However, the process does not adequately account for the realities of organizations in the voluntary sector, particularly the smaller and less formal organizations (revenue less than \$100,000) which comprise 55 percent of the sector, or just over 45,000 organizations in Ontario (NSNVO Ontario). For many of these organizations, resources are barely adequate, expertise in this area is minimal, time is stretched and the ability to make informed decisions requires a lengthy process. For these reasons we make the following suggestions.

- Schedules for consultations need to allow sufficient time for organizations to develop a considered response. Short lead times and the expectation that volunteers can react quickly especially during summer months will negate most opportunities to provide informed feedback.
- Small and medium sized organizations need considerable support and encouragement to participate in such consultations. These are often the organizations that are most effected, with the fewest resources. These types of organizations are critical members of the sector and need additional support for consultations and for their ongoing operations.
- Many voluntary sector organizations are unincorporated but may be considering incorporation or may be significantly effected by legislative changes. It is important to reach out to these organizations as well.

Ottawa chamber  
of voluntary organizations

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et communautaires d'Ottawa

- In general, the level of knowledge about such sophisticated aspects of organizations, such as incorporation laws is inadequate, even for many of the larger organizations. Readily available, easily accessed information about incorporation written specifically for public consumption would be a tremendous advantage for voluntary sector organizations.

We hope these suggestions and those of others will be considered and the modernization of the legislation will also provide an opportunity to make voluntary sector organizations stronger and more productive. We would like to take the opportunity to thank the Ministry for the support offered during the consultations and express our willingness to participate in further collaborations.

Sincerely,

Kathryn Ann Hill MSW, MA

Executive Director  
Healthpartners/Partenairesanté

Timothy T. Simboli PhD

Co-Chairs  
Ottawa Chamber of Voluntary Organizations

Executive Director  
Family Services à la famille Ottawa