



June 17, 2020

Sent via email

The Honourable Steven Guilbeault
Minister of Canadian Heritage
15 Eddy Street, 12th Floor
Gatineau, Quebec K1A 0M5
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Dear Minister Guilbeault

We have no doubt that you have been made aware of the recent disclosure by former employees of the Canadian Museum for Human Rights (CMHR) in Winnipeg that they experienced ongoing and systemic racism and harassment while working at this institution.

As the union representing 160 members employed at the CMHR, this came as no surprise to any of us. Our union Local Executive has been raising the issue repeatedly for several years. And recently, because management was not acknowledging or taking any action, our bargaining team tabled a proposal for mandatory anti-harassment, anti-discrimination training for all staff. As evidence of management's refusal to take this matter seriously, the proposal was rejected.

Recently in response to media reports, the CEO, John Young, stated that "the level of concern raised on social media comes as a surprise to many people working at the museum". This was no surprise to management and in particular the CEO.

The response that administration will reach out to staff and volunteers to listen to their experiences and concerns is, at best, a weak response that does not show the employer taking a stand against racism and harassment in a toxic workplace.

We understand the Mr. Young's appointment as CEO is due to expire on August 16, 2020. Minister Guilbeault, for the well-being of the employees and to ensure the institution is on a path to restore their credibility, we urge you to not extend Mr. Young's term as CEO of the CMHR.

We can tell you that “discussions” with staff following the social media posts were in no way sincere and there is absolutely no confidence among staff that the management team of the CMHR, under the direction of Mr. Young, understand or appreciate the seriousness of the situation.

The official mandate of the CMHR is:

“... to explore the subject of human rights, with special but not exclusive reference to Canada, in order to enhance the public’s understanding of human rights, to promote respect for others, and to encourage reflection and dialogue.”

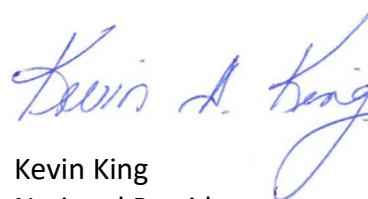
Our members are so very dedicated and proud of the work they do but feel that what is happening behind closed doors is hypocritical to the mandate. Unfortunately, over the years, staff have chosen to leave quietly instead of going public so as to preserve the integrity of the institution. Minister Guilbeault, we urge you to not extend Mr. Young and to ensure that any potential candidates for appointment as CEO have the skills necessary to ensure that appropriate actions are taken immediately to begin the process of restoring trust with employees and confidence with the Canadian public.

We look forward to your response.

Sincerely,



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