

AN OPEN LETTER TO CHANDRA ARYA, MP (LIB-NEPEAN) ABOUT PUBLIC ACCESS TO PUBLIC RECORDS OF CANADA'S RESIDENTIAL SCHOOLS HORROR

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<http://wellar.ca/informationresearch/>

<https://humanrights.ca/story/childhood-denied>

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/video/2021/jul/01/residential-schools-canada-indigenous-childrens-lives-video>

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AN OPEN LETTER TO CHANDRA ARYA, MP (LIB-NEPEAN) ABOUT PUBLIC ACCESS TO PUBLIC RECORDS OF CANADA'S RESIDENTIAL SCHOOLS HORROR

Mr. Chandra Arya,
Member of Parliament (Nepean)
House of Commons
Ottawa, Canada

RE: PUBLIC ACCESS TO PUBLIC RECORDS OF CANADA'S RESIDENTIAL SCHOOLS HORROR

Dear Mr. Arya,

You may recall that two years ago I contacted you regarding the federal government component of the politicians' transparency and accountability project undertaken by the Information Research Board (IRB) Inc. The focus of the investigation was to learn your position and that of Members of Cabinet regarding public access to public records.

I recall several project reports for your consideration, as they may serve as instructional points of reference as you examine this Open Letter.

- *Chronicling the Use of Transparency and Accountability as Political Buzzwords, and as Drivers Ensuring the Standard of Access to Public Records in Canada is Best Practice*
- *Interim Report 4. Responses of Prime Minister Justin Trudeau, Selected Cabinet Ministers, and MP Arya Chandra (Lib.- Nepean) to the Question: Do You Agree that Citizens are Entitled to Free, Easy, Timely, and Direct Online Access to the Public Records Held by the Government of Canada?*
- *Interim Report 5. Using Transparency and Accountability as Political Buzzwords, and as Drivers Ensuring Access to Public Records in Canada is Best Practice, Federal Cabinet Score: Political Buzzwords, 100%; Drivers, 0%*
- *Interim Report 10. Second Survey Asking Prime Minister Justin Trudeau, Selected Cabinet Ministers, and MP Arya Chandra (Lib.- Nepean): Do You Agree that Citizens are Entitled to Free, Easy, Timely, and Direct Online Access to the Public Records Held by the Government of Canada?*
- *Interim Report 11. Using Transparency and Accountability as Political Buzzwords, and as Drivers Ensuring Access to Public Records in Canada Is Best Practice: Federal Cabinet Score after Second Survey -- Political Buzzwords, 100%; Drivers, 0%*
- *Interim Report 15. Identifying Tactics Used by Politicians to Restrict Citizens' Access to Public Records*

Mr. Arya, the results of those surveys are cause for a number of concerns, beginning with the confirmation that, right off the top, you and the Cabinet members surveyed, including Prime Minister Justin Trudeau, did not express any support, none whatsoever, for citizens having free, easy, timely, and direct access to public records, and especially free, easy, timely, and direct online access to public records.

Now, as you may be aware, that absence of support for public access to public records is coming home to roost, so to speak, because it appears to be both the perception and the known reality that the federal government is far from engaging in full disclosure about the so-called residential schools horror, and is showing no inclination to provide citizens ready access to the records so that they can get to the truth of horror claims and counter-claims.

Mr. Arya, I have already ascertained that in principle neither you nor the federal Cabinet are likely to respond to questions about access to records involving the residential schools program. As one who has been there, done that might say, “Once burned twice shy about chasing federal politicians down the information rabbit hole.”

As a result, to make my case to you regarding the need for proper citizen access to the residential schools horror as I understand the matter, I am adapting the *J'accuse!* approach that Émile Zola used in his Open Letter to the President of France regarding the Dreyfus affair.

To overview several aspects of the residential schools horror as I understand the matter:

- Broadcast media and social media contain thousands of productions on a daily basis regarding what is frequently referred as the residential schools horror that was perpetrated by Canada's federal governments, including governments of both the Conservative and Liberal parties;
- This horror occurred by the authority and direction of Conservative and Liberal federal governments, with the core instruments of this genocide including politicians, senior civil servants, and members of the RCMP, as well as lay and religious order members of churches, including the Anglican Church, the Roman Catholic Church, and the United Church;
- The brutality of the Canadian genocide action consisted of mental, emotional, physical, sexual, medical, nutritional, and cultural abuse of indigenous children, many of them of tender age – four, five, six, and seven –, who were forcibly removed from their homes and families, with the intent of destroying the sense of identity of those who survived the horror inflicted upon them; and,

- Tragically, thousands of children did not survive and numerous questions remain to be fully and comprehensively answered, including the names and positions of those responsible for deciding what happened to the children after they perished

Broadcast and social media reports refer to the incalculable suffering inflicted upon the children, their families, and communities, and the painful suffering which continues to be endured by many First Nations people.

However, there is another aspect of what is described as a vile, disgusting, and repulsive government-sponsored, church-assisted genocide that is revolting beyond belief for many Canadians, and that aspect is the subject of this Open Letter.

Many comments refer to the abominable foot-dragging, stalling, bullying, and other miserable forms of behaviour which characterize the callous Harper government, as well as this government in discussions, negotiations, news releases, news management, and court actions involving First Nations, a pattern of seemingly reprehensible behaviour that is seen to be compounded by what is perceived to be the servility of both Conservative and Liberal politicians in deference to the financial interests and reputation of the Roman Catholic Church.

Further, as a related concern, there is the abject failure of the current federal government to require all organizations that participated in the residential schools program to produce any and all records which are requested by those advocating on behalf of the children who were forcibly removed from their families, homes, and communities, and deposited in so-called residential schools.

And then what, upon production of the records? At this stage, and in the absence of records, what we have are questions, questions, and more questions, but no definitive answers without the records. However, what history makes clear is that once it becomes widely known that records were compiled, and that is in fact the case in this instance, then it is futile for any government in a democratic society to attempt to curtail the search for truth. Sooner or later, it all comes out.

I hasten to add in that regard, and as you may be aware, all these records are products of fee-for-service arrangements which by definition means that they are the public's records, so there is no good reason whatsoever, none, for there to be any conditions limiting the availability of or access to these files.

However, because the records are not being produced in a timely manner for examination by the public, including First Nations representatives, answers are sought as to why there are obvious availability and access issues which are hindering inquiries, and are making it necessary to speculate, hypothesize, guess, surmise, conjecture, etc.,

in attempts to re-create what might have happened, how, why, where, and when to thousands of indigenous children deposited in numerous institutions.

My examination of numerous news stories indicates that many Canadians believe the federal government is trying to cover its tracks and those of its travelling companions and the Catholic Church in particular, by throwing up court-related roadblocks at every turn, thus smearing all of Canada and all Canadians in the process of trying to limit access to government and church records.

In sum, Mr. Arya, what we now seem to be seeing unfold to the disbelief of many Canadians as more evidence becomes available, is a systematic pattern of federal government after federal government stealthily engaging in cowardly and inhumane practices and legal manoeuvrings, and those governments include the current Liberal government of which you are a Member, and in which you are putatively serving as my representative in Parliament.

Mr. Arya, to the best of my knowledge you have been and continue to be complicit in the First Nations wrongdoing that has taken place since your election to Parliament.

Simply put, I do not recall any objection by you in any of your newsletters regarding the federal government's perpetuation of this horrendous state of affairs.

Moreover, I do not recall receiving any communications in which you explicitly state what you are doing to ensure that the federal government conscientiously undertakes whatever actions are deemed expeditious and appropriate by First Nations leaders to effectively, efficiently, and compassionately address problems that were imposed on First Nations people by the Government of Canada's residential schools program which was openly based on what is widely construed to be a policy of genocide that was executed for years, seemingly absent a second thought about its cruelty to all those affected, but especially the children of tender age.

Mr. Arya, I believe that there are many people in the riding of Nepean who join me in wanting to know the details of exactly what you have done since the beginning of this term to address First Nations issues, including those that are now known across Canada and much of the world as a result of evidence surfacing with regard to the residential schools horror.

And, I further believe that there are many people in the riding of Nepean who join me in wanting to know the details of exactly what outcomes you achieve during the remainder of this term of office to address First Nations issues, including those arising as a result of the residential schools program and its social, cultural, health, medical, financial, and economic consequences.

In the interests of time and convenience, please use a digital medium whereby weekly reports are posted on your website, and a section is included for comments from constituents.

As for frequency of reports, these need to be provided on a weekly basis, given what we already know about foot-dragging, stalling, lack of accountability, lack of transparency, and other failings of politicians.

Under the circumstances, and because an Open Letter like this should come as no surprise, it seems reasonable to expect that the suggested communication channel will be accessible within a week at the outside.

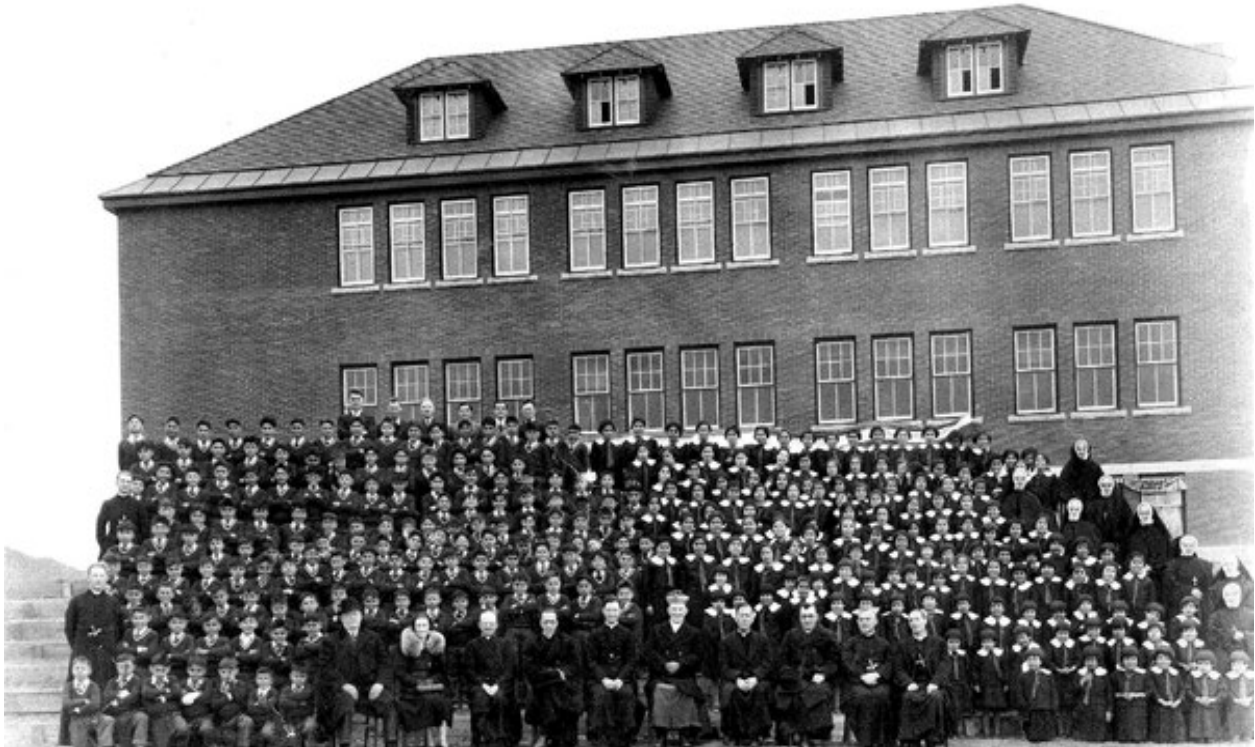
Thank you.

Dr. Barry Wellar
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Dated: July 7, 2021

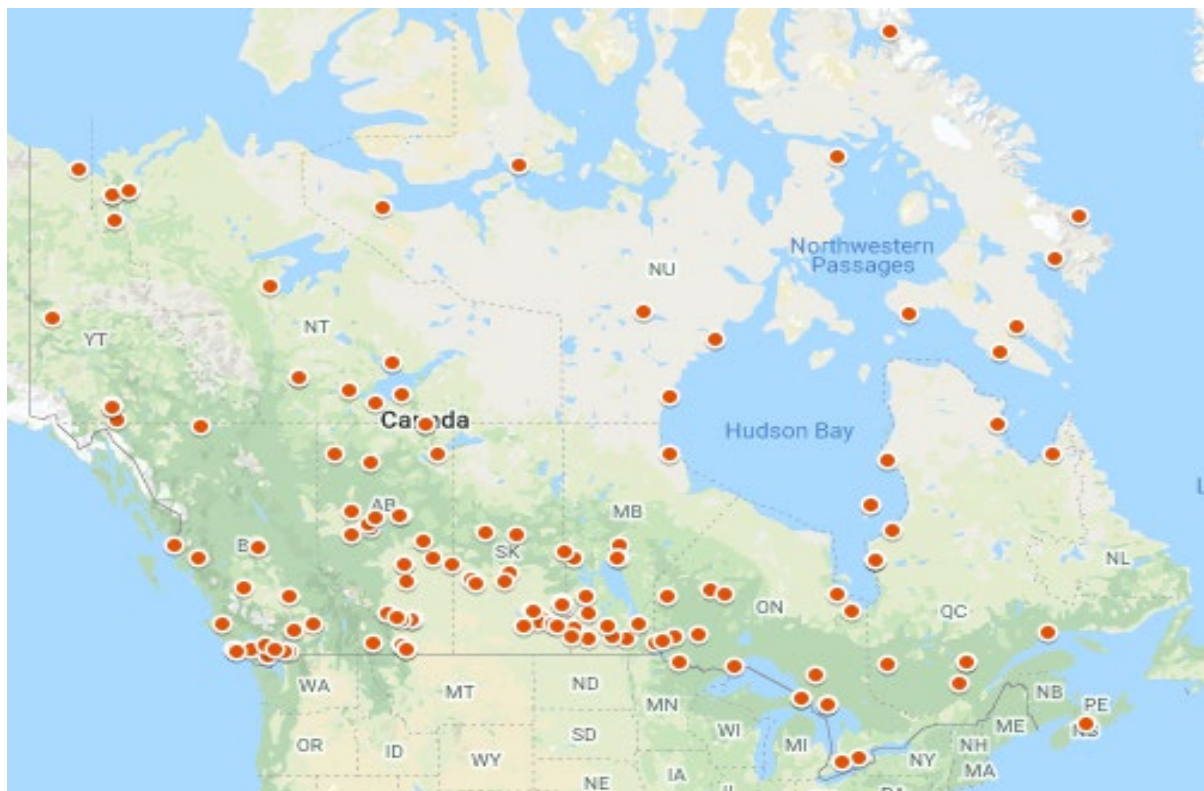


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Source: [Archdiocese of Vancouver](#)

MAP OF RESIDENTIAL SCHOOL LOCATIONS ACROSS CANADA



Source: [Residential Schools in Canada Interactive Map](#)