



Attention News/Assignment Editors:

For immediate release

The governor general: Outdated and overdue for reform

Dec. 5, 2008 - Toronto - The developments of the past week regarding the governor general's intervention in the matter of the government's loss of confidence has renewed calls from Canada's republican movement for reform of the office of head of state.

The group points out that regardless of the governor general's decision in this situation, many Canadians are outraged that a) such power resides in an unelected position, b) that such a position must, without question, bend to the wishes of any prime minister, whatever the party, and c) that decisions are heavily dependent on interpretation of "precedents and convention" rather than codified constitutional law.

According to Tom Freda, Citizens for a Canadian Republic's national director, "The position of the governor general has often been described as a constitutional referee whose job it is to ensure that parliament behaves. Well, if we're to use that analogy, then what we have now is something akin to one hockey team getting to choose or fire their own referee and always being assured of favourable calls."

"In a modern democracy, this is unacceptable," he adds. "Canada deserves a head of state who is selected by democratic means and is bound by our constitution, not vague, unwritten conventions."

CCR advocates reform of the position as preparation for its eventual severance from the British monarchy, an act which would make Canada a parliamentary republic. Public opinion polls indicate that this is the preference of a majority of Canadians.

The organization points out that the head of state reform issue is also one with widespread contemporary and historical support. Since 2004, CCR has supported the findings of the multi-party Standing Committee on Government Operations and Estimates report; "The Governor General of Canada Role, Duties and Funding for Activities, in which the following recommendations were made:

- 1) Conduct a review and initiate a debate on the mandate, constitutional role, responsibilities, and future evolution of the Office of Governor General.
- 2) Conduct a review of the process for selecting and appointing the Governor General.

Similar recommendations were made in the Constitutional Amendment Bill C-60 in 1978.

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ABOUT CITIZENS FOR A CANADIAN REPUBLIC

Citizens for a Canadian Republic is a registered non-partisan, not-for-profit organization advocating the full Canadianization of the head of state. More information is available at CCR's website.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- [The Governor General of Canada Role, Duties and Funding for Activities](http://www.canadian-republic.ca/pdf_files/GG_Role_Duties_and_Responsibilities.pdf)
http://www.canadian-republic.ca/pdf_files/GG_Role_Duties_and_Responsibilities.pdf
- [Republic / Monarchy Opinion Polls in Canada 1993 - 2008](http://www.canadian-republic.ca/polls.html)
<http://www.canadian-republic.ca/polls.html>

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A member of Common Cause, an alliance of four Commonwealth republican movements