



**Justice Centre**  
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# **Strengthening social trust and increasing civic engagement to improve civic resilience**

Brief to the House of Commons Standing Committee on  
Procedure and House Affairs

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# Introduction

Canada's federal government can strengthen social trust and civic engagement by upholding the rule of law and equality before the law.

This brief addresses three topics:

1. Social trust, the rule of law, and equality before the law
2. How “Equity, Diversity, Inclusion” (EDI) generates conflict
3. Federal support for EDI laws and policies

## Social trust, the rule of law, and equality before the law

Social trust is the trust that citizens have in each other, particularly among strangers. It depends heavily on the rule of law — especially the principle that people are equal before the law, regardless of personal characteristics such as race, skin colour, ethnicity, sex, religion, wealth, social status, or political power. When some people enjoy superior legal rights based on race, ethnicity, or any other personal characteristic, this predictably creates hostility and resentment and undermines social trust.

Equality before the law is a pre-requisite for social trust. We cannot develop social trust or achieve reconciliation between people when different laws apply to different people based on their race and ancestry. The way to social trust and reconciliation is to apply the principle “equal rights for all, special privileges for none.”

In a diverse, multicultural, multi-ethnic, multi-racial country like Canada, trust between citizens is enhanced when Canadians understand that they are all equal before the law. Conversely, social trust is undermined when we depart from this principle.

## Generating conflict through “Equity, Diversity, Inclusion”

The rule of law is one of the founding principles of Canada and our Constitution, as stated in the preamble to the *Charter*: “Whereas Canada is founded upon principles that recognize the supremacy of God and the rule of law.” This preamble ends with a colon, showing that the *Charter* flows from, and derives its strength from, the supremacy of God and the rule of law.

The rule of law is undermined when citizens are encouraged to believe that their legal rights depend on personal characteristics such as race, ancestry, skin colour, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression.

The ideology of “Equity, Diversity, Inclusion” (EDI) undermines the rule of law by constantly emphasizing immutable personal characteristics that divide people, rather than our common humanity, which is the key to unity and social trust. This misplaced emphasis on immutable personal characteristics, as opposed to our common humanity, therefore undermines social trust by encouraging conflict and competition between groups.

EDI teaches people to view every individual as either a member of a victim group or an oppressor group, rather than as a fellow human being. It promotes pre-judging others based on group membership instead of the content of their individual character or the merit of their actual arguments.

By encouraging permanent conflict between oppressors and oppressed and pre-judging individuals based on their group membership marked by immutable traits, EDI is highly toxic to social trust among Canadians.

## **Federal support for EDI laws and policies**

It is no secret that the federal government pursues EDI laws and policies. These policies undermine social trust by replacing merit-based hiring with quotas for women, Aboriginals, visible minorities, and others.

In Canada today, the *Criminal Code* authorizes race-based sentencing. Courts often provide lighter sentences to offenders on the basis of their race, ancestry, or immigration status.

### **Examples of race-based or immigration-status-based sentencing adjustments include:**

- **Everton Javaun Downey** (Black offender): Convicted of second-degree murder for stabbing his girlfriend 15 times. Received life in prison with parole eligibility after 12 years, reduced in part due to “systemic, structural and community factors” relating to his experience as a Black person.<sup>1</sup>
- **Unnamed Nova Scotia man** (Black offender): Convicted of incest after impregnating his intellectually disabled adult daughter. Received only two years of house arrest (instead of up to 14 years), partly because of his race and background.<sup>2</sup>
- **Jason Leo Tait** (Aboriginal offender): Accessory after the fact to murder. Received 6.5 years instead of the Crown’s requested 10 years after applying Gladue factors.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> [NP View: Justice by skin colour | National Post](#)

<sup>2</sup> IBID

<sup>3</sup> IBID

- **Kenneth Morrison** (Aboriginal offender): Murder conviction reduced to manslaughter on appeal largely due to his Indigenous ancestry, resulting in approximately 12 years served.<sup>4</sup>
- **Laimiki Toonoo** (Aboriginal offender): Attempted murder sentence reduced by two years specifically because of his Indigenous status and the hardship of serving time outside Nunavut.<sup>5</sup>

Additional cases show lighter sentences granted to non-citizens to avoid deportation consequences:

- **Adebowale Adekoya** (Nigerian permanent resident): Granted a conditional discharge on appeal explicitly to prevent deportation.<sup>6</sup>
- **Roosevelt Rush** (Jamaican national): Cocaine trafficking sentence halved due to likely deportation.<sup>7</sup>
- **Sajeevan** (Indian national): Voyeurism sentence reduced specifically to avoid deportation on grounds of serious criminality.<sup>8</sup>

This pattern of applying different legal standards based on race or ancestry extends beyond the criminal justice system. In March 2026, it was revealed that an Aboriginal land agreement had been signed by the federal government in secret. This Musqueam Agreement declares Aboriginal title over much of Greater Vancouver and surrounding areas, creating uncertainty for homeowners who purchased their properties in good faith. British Columbia was reportedly not consulted, nor were the approximately two million affected residents. Other First Nations, for what it's worth, also assert title over the same lands.

All Canadians today are settlers or descendants of settlers. Why should Canadians whose ancestors arrived more than 500 years ago have different legal rights from those whose ancestors arrived within the past 500 years?

## Recommendations

To strengthen social trust and civic resilience, the federal government should:

- Repudiate EDI and all race-based laws and policies;
- Abolish the *Indian Act*;

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<sup>4</sup> IBID

<sup>5</sup> [Inuit man gets reduced sentence for attempted murder of woman | National Post](#)

<sup>6</sup> [N.B. judge reduces Nigerian man's sentence to stave off deportation | National Post](#)

<sup>7</sup> [How often criminals get special treatment because of race or identity | National Post](#)

<sup>8</sup> IBID

- Repeal the Musqueam Agreement and refrain from further negotiations conferring Aboriginal title over privately purchased lands;
- Uphold equality before the law by rejecting race, ethnicity, or ancestry as a basis for legal rights;
- Embrace fully the principle of “equal rights for all, special privileges for none.”

## **About the Author**

John Carpay, B.A., LL.B. is the President of the Justice Centre for Constitutional Freedoms, a registered charity founded in 2010. The Justice Centre defends the constitutional rights and freedoms of Canadians through litigation and education.