

Apology to lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer and two-spirit federal public servants

Today, the Prime Minister delivered an apology to lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, and two spirit (LGBTQ2) Canadians, their loved ones, families, and communities. In the apology, the Prime Minister acknowledged the Government of Canada's role in creating a culture of systemic oppression and criminalization towards LGBTQ2 people.

As public servants, diversity, inclusion and equality must be an integral part of our work, and it is important for us to understand that federal legislation, programs, policies, and practices are key tools used to advance and reinforce equality.

For many LGBTQ2 public servants, some still working alongside us today, our workplaces were not safe or welcoming places. In fact, it was only in 1996 that the Canadian Human Rights Tribunal found that the denial of same-sex benefits to federal public servants was against both the *Charter of Rights and Freedoms* and the *Canadian Human Rights Act*. The darkest chapter of our history as an employer was from the 1950s to the 1990s, in what is often referred to as "The Purge", when LGBTQ2 public servants were routinely singled out, which often limited or ended their careers. People working in federal departments or serving in the Canadian Armed Forces faced intimidation, stigmatization and loss of dignity.

On behalf of the Public Service of Canada, I would like to apologize to those who suffered because of this injustice. All public servants need to be treated equally and with dignity. What happened to you was wrong.

I call on all public servants to join me in helping ensure the federal Public Service continues to become more inclusive.

We have come a long way as a country and as a public service. There is still work to be done. Today is an important step and the federal Public Service will do everything possible to ensure that this never happens again.

Michael Wernick
Clerk of the Privy Council and Secretary to the Cabinet

Associated Links:

Additional [resources](#) can be found on the [Free to be me website](#).