

In [an interview](#) with CBC Radio's Jim Brown, Ivan Fellegi, who served as Canada's Chief Statistician from 1985 to 2008, set forth five ill-effects of the Harper Government's surprise decision to make a crucial part of the 2011 census voluntary.



- The results will be biased because aboriginals, new immigrants, the poor, those with low educational attainment, and the very well off are less likely to respond. This will deprive Canada of important information about social trends such as income polarization. It will eliminate our best source of information about aboriginal Canadians, immigrants, and minority language groups.
- Municipalities and provinces will lose their main source of planning information for transportation systems, housing, and other local issues.
- The introduction of such a major change will disrupt any comparison from previous censuses, since it will be impossible to know whether a trend is real or simply an artifact of the switch to voluntary reporting.
- The change will deprive private pollsters and researchers of the baseline data they use to check the validity of their samples, and adjust them to ensure they accurately reflect the Canadian population.
- The change means we will spend upwards of \$100 million to gather unusable data.