

THE CANADIAN HEARING SOCIETY
LA SOCIÉTÉ CANADIENNE DE L'OUÏE



August 30, 2006

Official statement concerning the August 11, 2006 federal court decision regarding access for Deaf Canadians.

Toronto, ON – In a country where a fundamental principle of our democracy is open access to government, the Federal Court of Canada's decision of August 11, 2006 enforces this right for Deaf citizens. The ruling supports existing legislation and legal precedents addressing the obligation to provide accessible services, e.g. the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, the Canadian Human Rights Act, the provincial Human Rights Codes, the Eldridge decision and other Supreme Court of Canada rulings.

We at The Canadian Hearing Society applaud the decision as a victory for both Deaf Canadians and the government. We have every confidence that the implications of the decision can be practically met and affordably implemented. Just as you would schedule an appointment with your doctor, the federal government would schedule a sign language interpreter upon request when meeting with a Deaf Canadian.

This is an issue of equity. To ask voting, tax-paying Deaf Canadians to pay for access to their own government is like asking people in wheelchairs to bring their own ramps.

Deaf Canadians should have the same access to their government as hearing Canadians. The federal court decision of August 11 guarantees this.

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The Canadian Hearing Society (CHS) www.chs.ca: provides services that enhance the independence of deaf, deafened and hard of hearing people, and that encourage the prevention of hearing loss. Established in 1940, CHS is the largest agency of its kind delivering 17 programs, from Employment Counselling and Sign Language classes to Hearing Aids and Communication Devices, through 28 offices.

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