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Commissioner Mario Dion
Office of the Conflict of Interest and Ethics Commissioner
Parliament of Canada
66 Slater Street, 22nd Floor
Ottawa, ON K1A 0A6
By email: info@cie.parl.gc.ca

July 3, 2020

Re: Investigation into the conduct of Prime Minister Justin Trudeau

Dear Commissioner Dion,

I am writing with regard to a potential breach of Article 7 of the *Conflict of Interest Act* by Prime Minister Justin Trudeau and public office holders in the Office of the Prime Minister regarding the decision to engage WE Charity to administer a \$900 million student-grant program.

As reported in the media, the Prime Minister and his family have very close ties with WE Charities. During his campaign to become leader of the Liberal Party of Canada, Mr. Trudeau received the support of the WE Charity co-founders, including a donation from one of them for the maximum allowable amount. The Prime Minister's mother and brother have both been featured guests at WE. His wife hosts one of their podcasts and Justin Trudeau himself has been promoted at WE rallies. News of the decision by the Prime Minister to grant this \$900 million contract to WE has raised many disturbing questions in the media and among Canadians.

It is also been reported in the media that outsourcing this project to WE rather than utilizing the civil service will certainly help the financial bottom line of an organization that has been reeling from the shut down of their main financial source of income – hosting large youth rallies. In fact, it was at their last large rally that Ms. Sophie-Gregoire contracted COVID-19.

The awarding of this contract and the relationship between the PMO and WE Charity requires closer scrutiny. The co-founder stated that he was personally called by the Prime Minister's office to implement the student grant program[1]. Although he later retracted this statement it raises questions about the close relationship between the PMO and WE.

It is concerning that the Prime Minister has claimed that no other group could have possibly handled this file. Multiple experts in the volunteer-charity sector have publicly said otherwise. This is a group that has received a series of single-source contracts from the Trudeau government and has now been handed control of a \$900 million emergency fund that must be doled out in a short period of time.

This is not to question the work of WE or their dedication to young people. It is a question of whether or not the Prime Minister's decision was influenced by his close family connections to this organization.

We must ensure that decisions regarding the spending of public dollars in a time of unprecedented economic crisis are based on the best evidence regarding the best potential outcomes.

Given the close relationship between the Trudeau family and the WE Charity, I feel there may be a prima facie breach of Article 7 which reads as follows:

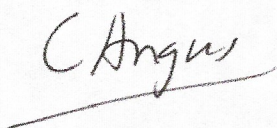
"No public office holder shall, in the exercise of an official power, duty or function, give preferential treatment to any person or organization based on the identity of the person or organization that represents the first-mentioned person or organization."

If preferential treatment has been given, whether explicit or implicit, by the Prime Minister or the Prime Minister's Office to WE Charity to implement the student grant program, it would be another significant breach of the public trust and the Act by this Prime Minister.

As the Prime Minister himself has said in the past, it is not sufficient to follow the Act but to be seen living up to the spirit of it.

I urge you to investigate so that the facts of the matter can be determined and an appropriate finding made within the scope of the *Conflict of Interest Act*.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "C Angus", with a horizontal line drawn underneath it.

Charlie Angus
MP Timmins-James Bay

[1] "So myself, my team... had all watched this (April 22nd announcement), and the next day, the Prime Minister's Office kindly called us and said, 'you know that announcement we just made? Would you be interested in helping us actually implement it?'," Kielburger told participants on the June 12 video conference, in which he reached out to community organizations to get involved in the student grant program."
<https://nationalpost.com/news/politics/we-charity-boss-said-pmo-called-to-award-900m-student-grant-program-day-after-it-was-announced>