

INSTITUT
DU MARIAGE ET
DE LA FAMILLE
CANADA



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For Immediate Release

SEX: A TELL-ALL EXHIBITION IN OTTAWA: AN OPEN LETTER TO MINISTER OF HERITAGE JAMES MOORE

May 16, 2012 (Ottawa) - Late last week, the Institute of Marriage and Family Canada began receiving complaints about a special exhibit which is to start showing tomorrow, on Thursday, May 17, 2012, at Ottawa's Science and Technology Museum.

This exhibit, aimed initially at ages 12 and up, is called SEX: A Tell-all Exhibition.

It includes information displayed in a manner designed to be both erotic and titillating and shows sex without relationship, commitment and certainly without marriage as the norm. The museum is 80 percent funded by our tax dollars and is a crown corporation.

As a result, the Institute of Marriage and Family Canada has written an open letter to Minister of Heritage James Moore, included below, asking for the exhibit to be cancelled.

The complaints and feedback of parents is making a difference. By the time we visited the museum, they had already raised the age of entry to 16 and removed a display showing youth how to masturbate.

The Institute of Marriage and Family Canada is uniquely placed here in Ottawa, ready to respond at moments like these. We went, had a discussion with the Director of Public Relations and viewed the museum first hand. Many who commented in early reports did so based on the reports of others; however, thanks to our visit to the museum, the Institute is able to condemn this exhibit with authority, not based in shrill rhetoric or name-calling, but based in solid research about the importance of family formation and marriage in delaying teen sexual initiation.

If you'd like to support us to be able to continue this important work, you are able to do so by [clicking here](#) or calling us at 1-866-373-4632.

Thank you for your continued support.

Our letter to Minister Moore follows below

May 16, 2012

Hon. James Moore, P.C., M.P.
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Dear Minister Moore,

It has recently come to our attention that the Canadian Museum of Science and Technology is about to open a new exhibit entitled: SEX: A Tell-all Exhibition. This exhibit is billed as presenting “information on sexuality in a scientific, engaging and interactive manner.” Furthermore, it offers “reliable answers to (teen) questions about sexuality.”

Unfortunately, this billing runs contrary to reality. Based on a tour by our staff, the exhibition espouses a specific point of view including the approval and promotion of anal sex, multiple sexual partners and sex without emotional/marital commitment. Surely these topics are not a part of the mandate of the CMST. Upon further questioning, museum staff confirmed that the previously included animated video of children masturbating has been removed and the unaccompanied age restriction has been raised to 16 years. It is apparent from these changes that the CMST is aware of the public reaction to this display. However, further changes are still necessary.

This exhibit includes what can only be described as soft pornography, expressly designed for youth in the context of a museum.

The views presented therein are deeply personal by their very nature. Sexuality is something many families would prefer to teach within the family context. Furthermore, surveys demonstrate that parents want sexual information to link sex with love, intimacy and commitment – something completely unrepresented in this exhibit. Surveys also reveal that as many as 91 percent of parents want their teens to delay sexual activity until after the completion of high school, reducing the risk of abuse, STIs and unintended pregnancies that can alter the course of a young person’s life. Where the exhibit does address the risk of STIs, the premise that abstinence and monogamy are the only 100% sure way to avoid STIs is also absent. Evidence does not show that early exposure to this type of “education” will delay sexual initiation. To the contrary, the best means of delaying early sexual initiation is through the active involvement of the biological dad in the household.

The following are quotes from the exhibit, which, help create a picture of the tone of the museum:

- “My physical appearance, personality and ideas make me unique, but so does my sexuality. The age at which I start having sex, the types of relationships I experience, how my body reacts – all of these define me.” Unfortunately, supporting early sexual encounters has been shown to result in unwanted pregnancies and places youth at a higher risk of emotional and mental health issues.

- In learning about passionate kissing, youth can read: “When my mouth comes in contact with yours all these nerve cells bombard me with stimulation. I feel you, I touch you, I taste you and we intertwine.” There is no scientific purpose to this dialogue and it is accompanied by visuals of passionate kissing on video loop.
- In the section – “What is that called?” we read, “Pussy, snatch, bush for girls. Prick, cock, dick for boys. The language used to talk about sexuality is astonishingly creative...” This runs counter to all the provincial and general education curricula that instruct parents and teachers to use the correct terminology for body parts.

According to the CMST website, the museum’s mandate is: “to study the Transformation of Canada,” and can be broken into four sub-themes:

- Canadian Context – reflecting Canadian achievements
- Finding New Ways – the search for new knowledge and new ways of doing things
- How "Things" Work – Developing an understanding of how "things" work
- People, Science and Technology – People and their dynamic relationship with science and technology

In spite of asking on site, it is not clear to me that this exhibit fits into that mandate in any way.

Minister Moore, I would respectfully ask that this exhibition be cancelled. I realize that the CMST is Crown Corporation operating at arms-length, however, with 80% of their funding coming directly from taxpayers, I believe that many of them will be outraged that this exhibit is being operated through their funding. I believe that it is incumbent upon the federal government as the funders, the CMST Trustees and the administrative staff to reconsider this exhibit.

Along with Canada’s other national museums, the CMST has had a strong, positive reputation. Based on the opinions of many taxpayers who are already providing our office with feedback, and a personal tour through the exhibit, I believe that this exhibit is out of touch with the will of the majority of Canadians and its continuation will only sully the museum’s reputation.

I would gratefully request to meet with you in order to discuss this issue further. With the exhibit set to open tomorrow, on May 17, obviously time is of the essence. I look forward to your earliest reply and commitment to review this situation.

Yours truly,



Dave Quist
Executive Director, Institute of Marriage and Family Canada

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