

Minister of Middle Class
Prosperity and
Associate Minister of Finance



Ministre de la Prospérité de la
classe moyenne et
ministre associée des Finances

Ottawa, Canada K1A 0G5

30 March 2021

Mr. Chris Warkentin, M.P.
Chair, Standing Committee on Access to Information, Privacy and Ethics
ETHI@parl.gc.ca

Dear Mr Warkentin:

For the past year our government has been very focused on our many support programs for Canadian families, businesses and workers as we all try to get through this pandemic – which has had quite a devastating impact on our daily lives, routines and economy. We remain 100% committed and focused on helping Canadians get through this challenging time.

Unfortunately, the opposition have again opted to play political games, using their opposition day motion on 25 March 2021 to call for Ministerial staff to testify at committee. This despite the fact that committees have held countless hearings for nine months, and have heard from the Prime Minister, his Chief of Staff, the Clerk of the Privy Council, the former Finance Minister, the Minister of Diversity and Inclusion and Youth, and many public servants. The government has also released 5,000 pages of documents.

As you know, a key tradition of our Canadian democracy is the principle of ministerial responsibility. Cabinet ministers are accountable to the House of Commons for the decisions of the government, and of their trusted political staff.

As a responsible government we know the importance of the principle of ministerial accountability. Unelected political staff members are accountable to Members of Cabinet. And Cabinet is accountable to Parliament.

The Government House Leader stated clearly in the House last week that it is the government's responsibility to send ministers to account for the actions of their office.

Accordingly, Mr Amitpal Singh has been instructed to not appear before the committee. In his place, I will attend the meeting on behalf of the government on Wednesday, 31 March 2021.

I look forward to answering the questions the committee may have.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'M. Fortier'.

Honourable Mona Fortier, P.C., M.P.