

# Making the case for making the case <sup>[1]</sup>

Caledon commentary

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## AVAILABILITY

Full article in pdf <sup>[2]</sup>

### About this article:

This op ed was published in today's Toronto Star as "Saving Data to Save the Country." It is the last commentary in our series on the Data Rescue campaign - aside from a lessons learned piece, which we will be preparing. We welcome any feedback on this crowdfunding experience. It was an experiment for us all.

As our campaign enters its final stage, we want to take this opportunity to thank you, friends of Caledon, for helping us get so close to achieving our Data Rescue goal of \$20,000. With only three days left in our campaign, we have reached \$17,736 or 88 percent of our goal. Please visit [datarescue.ca](http://datarescue.ca), view the video and - if you haven't done so yet - make a charitable donation. Please help us reach our target by passing along this message to members of your network. We're almost there!

### Excerpts:

In its 2012 Budget, Ottawa announced - with no warning - that it was dismantling the National Council of Welfare. This body had been set up by the federal government in 1962 to provide advice to the Minister responsible for income security in Canada. Its purpose was to conduct high-quality research on poverty and to ensure that citizen voices were heard at the highest level of policy deliberation.

To this day, I have not been able to find the actual reference to the slated closure. The death sentence is buried somewhere in the bowels of the massive 'Omnibus Bill' and almost went virtually unnoticed.

When we heard the news, the Caledon Institute decided after much deliberation to rescue the work of the Council. My colleague Ken Battle and I had worked at the National Council of Welfare in the 1980s and had developed the methodologies employed in several of its reports.

There was one Council study that we knew was particularly important - because it almost never came to be. The Council had decided to write a report on welfare, which acts as the income program of last resort for Canadians with no other means of financial support.

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The termination of the long-form Census and its replacement by the voluntary National Household Survey have proven disastrous in terms of solid evidence for good policy decisions. The recently-published poverty data is especially suspect. The associated loss of several national surveys, including the Survey of Labour and Income Dynamics, means that we no longer can track participation of individuals in the labour market over time and have no way of measuring the dynamics of poverty.

No citizen in this country can afford to remain idle as Ottawa strips away our most important collective resource - publicly available information about who we are and the reforms required to ensure a good quality life for all Canadians. There is no better time than now to make this case.

**Region:** Canada <sup>[3]</sup>

**Tags:** statistics <sup>[4]</sup>

federal programs <sup>[5]</sup>

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