

# A STATEMENT BY MINISTER HON. JULIAN FANTINO, MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT FOR VAUGHAN AND ASSOCIATE MINISTER OF NATIONAL DEFENCE

May 29, 2015

Recently, Rogers Communications announced that they were ending all ethnic news programming on the OMNI stations. For the Italian-Canadian community and other ethnic communities, this was devastating, as it means the end of all local Italian-language and other language news and current affairs television programming on OMNI. Throughout the years, this programming on OMNI has been a vital link to local community television news for the Italian-Canadian population of the Great Toronto Area and throughout Ontario.

I recently wrote to the President and Chief Executive Officer of Rogers Communications, Guy Laurence, pleading with him to reconsider this decision and reinstate such news and current affairs television programming – especially Italian – on the multicultural OMNI station. The response by Rogers Communications did not substantively address any of the concerns that I raised in regards to this matter. This response was not good enough.

As a result, after discussions with my colleagues in the Harper government, our Conservative Members of Parliament will call a special parliamentary committee meeting in the days ahead on this very issue – where we will force Rogers to explain themselves to Members of Parliament and the Canadian public.

Please see below for the motion submitted to the Standing Committee on Canadian Heritage by Member of Parliament Rick Dykstra, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Canadian Heritage, earlier today (the exact date and time of the meeting will be confirmed shortly, following the formal adoption of the motion): That the Standing Committee of Canadian Heritage invite representatives from OMNI to discuss their recent programming changes, specifically as they relate to local news coverage in Punjabi, Cantonese, Mandarin and Italian; and that the meeting take place prior to June 18th and that the meeting be scheduled for two hours.