

CIUT-FM 89.5
UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO COMMUNITY RADIO INC.
&
“STUDENT CHOICE INITIATIVE”

As you may or may not know the Ontario Government has announced the introduction of the “Student Choice Initiative”. This will affect student levies that support campus services and organizations that have not been designated as “essential” as outlined in the new policy. As it stands right now campus media (radio, newspapers) have not been categorized as such. This could jeopardize the future of our radio station not to mention freedom of speech and expression. In July 2019 it will be compulsory for all U of T undergraduate students to go online and indicate what services and groups they wish to opt-out of supporting. Student levies make up roughly 50% of the radio stations revenue. The fees we collect from undergrad students helps CIUT-FM cover its annual operating budget. Included in the budget are fixed costs such as transmitter site rental fees, music royalties, salaries, etc. A significant loss of revenue would put CIUT-FM at risk to the point of collapse or to become unrecognizable as we know it today. CIUT-FM is the last FM campus community radio service in Toronto and therefore an opt-out is not acceptable for our organization. We are and wish to remain that very important and vital voice for the community on campus and at large. We stay steadfast to our mission to continue to meet the expectations of the CRTC and our audience to deliver the best alternative to mainstream and CBC radio. Our music and spoken word programming is unique, distinct, and crucial.

What I would like all volunteers to do is connect with your local Member of Provincial Parliament (MPP) immediately. Let them know what is at stake (do not under any circumstances be abusive, instead be constructive and factual). You can ask them to stop the Student Choice Initiative and/or to have campus media included as an “essential” service. You can find out which MPP you need to contact by going to <https://www.ola.org/en/get-involved/contact-mpp> and/or you may contact me at ken.stowar@ciut.fm

I would also like you to communicate with listeners, supporters, musicians, and other friends of CIUT and ask them for a letter of support. All letters should be directed to their local MPP as and they should copy me as well so I can be assured that all supporter communication is being delivered to the appropriate contact(s) Ask the listeners, supporters to put in their own words what CIUT-FM means to them, what services it provides them, etc. in the most eloquent manner possible.

Time is of the essence. The formal framework has yet to be delivered to all universities across the province but is supposed to happen sometime this month, although no specific date has yet been announced.