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March 19, 2010

**The Honourable Dalton McGuinty,
The Premier Of Ontario
Queen's Park
Toronto ON M7A 1A1**

Dear Premier McGuinty,

On behalf of the board of directors of the Iranian Canadian Congress (ICC), I am writing to congratulate you on your pioneering plans to make Ontario the world's most successful and inclusive jurisdiction.

ICC's membership and Ontario's Iranian community more broadly, make up some of our province's most accomplished, educated, and forward looking citizens. I am thus writing to bring a few key issues of concern of our community to your attention so that together we can advance prosperity, harmony, and inclusiveness across this great province.

As you are aware, there are well over one hundred thousand Ontarians of Iranian backgrounds living in the Greater Toronto Area. They comprise more than half of all people of Iranian background living in Canada. Even by the high standards of the three-million strong Iranian diaspora, ours is an exceptionally highly educated, resourceful, and diverse community. An examination of the quality of Iranian cultural events and products held and produced in the GTA over the past few years shows the uniqueness and high potential of our community.

This past week, CBC radio's Metro Morning program has run a series on the high caliber and significant economic impact of the Iranian community on our city and province – claiming that over the past few years, the Iranian community has made an annual investment of hundreds of millions of dollars in our economy.

Against such a background, we would like to stress the critical importance of increasing the level of investment in the skills and capacities of Ontarians of Iranian background. Specifically, our organization would like to request a meeting with your office to discuss the following issues:

- Securing provincial start-up and matching funds for the establishment of an Iranian Community Centre in the Greater Toronto Area. We would like to discuss the criteria the Ontario government has used so far to provide this type of support to numerous multicultural communities, as well as the amount of grants;
- Providing support and matching funds of the establishment of at least one Iranian studies endowed chair at a university in the Greater Toronto Area;



- Making plans for your appearance at a few functions of the Iranian Community where substantive issues can be discussed.

To the best of our knowledge, no opportunity has been made available yet for you to spend quality time with members of Ontario's Iranian community. Given the high economic and educational achievements of our community, and especially because of our commitment to Ontario's present and future success, we would be delighted to assist your office in building better links to our growing community.

Board members of Iranian Canadian Congress would be honoured to meet with you directly to discuss how we might work together to build an even better Ontario.

Please let us know.

Best Wishes,
Behnam Esfahanizadeh
President
Iranian Canadian Congress
behnam@iccongress.ca

Copy: Dr. Reza Moridi, MPP