

# PRESSRELEASE

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**For Immediate Release**

**Contact:** Alex Usher

## **CASA Fights Travel CUTS price discrimination**

Ottawa, Ontario (Feb. 8)—The Canadian Alliance of Student Associations (CASA) today announced that it was appealing to the International Student Travel Confederation (ISTC) in Copenhagen, Denmark, regarding Travel CUTS' discriminatory pricing regime for the International Student ID Card (ISIC).

Currently, Travel CUTS - which is wholly owned by the Canadian Federation of Students (CFS) - is the exclusive Canadian distributor of the ISIC card, which is issued by the ISTC. Most student travel fares require the presentation of the card in order to obtain the discount. Travel CUTS charges students \$15 for the card if their student associations are not members of CFS, while allowing students at member associations to receive the card free of charge. The non-member price is deliberately set higher than the CFS membership fee in order to entice schools to join their political lobby organization.

"The ISIC card is being used in Canada as a political tool by a political organization (CFS)," said CASA National Director Alex Usher in a letter to the ISTC's Director General. "ISTC is a non-partisan agency whose brief is to be of assistance to all students, regardless of the partisan affiliation of the student association of which they happen to be members."

There are two problematic aspects with the current set-up; firstly that Travel CUTS has *exclusivity* over distribution in Canada, and secondly that its pricing regime is *discriminatory*. "We have asked ISTC to revoke either the price regime or the exclusivity arrangement. It doesn't matter much which one we get - either way, students who don't want to be part of CFS will pay less for their ISIC cards."

"The ISTC is a wonderful organization which exists to help all students regardless of the partisan affiliation of the student association to which they belong. It is simply reprehensible that CFS has perverted this organization's mandate through it's partisan, discriminatory pricing policy," Usher concluded.

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## **CASA forswears violence, challenges CFS to do the same**

Ottawa, Ontario (FEB. 14)— Following a meeting of its membership last weekend, the Canadian Alliance of Student Associations (CASA) announced that it formally renounces violence as a method of pressuring governments on educational issues. The organization took the step in response to what CASA National Director Alex Usher referred to as "the shameful events which occurred during the last week's Canadian Federation of Students (CFS) march in Toronto".

The membership of CASA unanimously adopted the following motion: "Be it resolved that CASA forswear the use of violence as a lobbying or rally tactic; let it be further resolved that the membership empower the National Director to take punitive action against any member of the Board of Directors encouraging, condoning or counselling the use of violence at CASA-sanctioned events."

Usher was bitter in describing his feelings following last week's debacle. "We have yet to hear a word of condemnation, remorse or even regret from either (CFS chair) Guy Caron or (CFS chair-elect) Brad Lavigne as a result of last Wednesday's riot," Usher said. "Not only does their silence show a completely callous lack of feeling for the men who were injured in the ruckus, but it also gives the impression that they approve of violence as a tactic. I think it is simply disgusting."

CASA's membership also issued a challenge to CFS to adopt a similar resolution. "If they have any decency, or if they are in any way aware of the revulsion which most students expressed about last week's farce, CFS should pass such a motion," Usher said. However, he was pessimistic about CFS' likely reaction. "It (CFS) is controlled by a motley cabal whose views on lobbying come from watching *Les Miserables* too often. I doubt if Caron or Lavigne have the inclination or the guts to take a stand for non-violence against the Abby Hoffman fan club which calls itself the CFS National Executive," Usher concluded.