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For Immediate Release

## CANADA'S DECLINING MARRIAGE RATE SPELLS INCREASING POVERTY

**September 19, 2012 (Ottawa)** – Today Statistics Canada released new 2011 Census family-related data. While some hail “increasing family diversity,” the declining trend lines for marriage in face of increasing common-law and lone-parent families are nothing to celebrate.

Between 2006 and 2011, the number of common-law couples rose 13.9%, which, Statistics Canada reports, is more than four times the increase for married couples. Likewise, lone-parent families increased 8%.

Lone-parent and common-law couples are less stable than married couples. Research indicates that children raised in common-law families are five times more likely to experience a parental split than children of married parents. Children raised in lone-parent families are more likely to live in poverty, as measured by the Low Income Cut-Off in Canada.

After the 2006 Census, Statistics Canada reported that 8.2% of couple households with children are in poverty (as measured by the Low Income Cut-Off, LICO), 16.0% of single father households live below the LICO and 32.2% of single mother households live below the LICO (almost four times more likely to be poor than a couple household). 29% of all single parents live below the LICO.

“A declining marriage culture is the wrong trend line for Canada,” says Andrea Mrozek, Manager of Research and Communications. “All research points to the fact that married parent families offer more stability for children and decreased poverty rates,” she added.

Demographically, Canada continues to experience an aging population. Fewer couples have children living with them. In 2006, 42.7% of couples were without children. In 2011 this increased to 44.5%. Couples today are less likely than the Baby Boomers to marry early and have children. The Baby Boomers are aging and entering retirement. This demographic decline is an important marker in making public policy, as we consider how to support our social welfare net on a declining tax base.

There is much data to mine from this release, and the Institute of Marriage and Family Canada will be doing so over the coming weeks and months.

For additional commentary, please contact Andrea Mrozek, Manager of Research and Communications at 613-565-3832, ext 7502.

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