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**CANADIAN STARS CALL ON GOVERNMENT  
TO KEEP STATUS OF THE ARTIST PROMISE**  
*Fundamental changes needed says ACTRA*

**For Immediate Release:** Toronto, April 19, 2007 – Canadian stars Wendy Crewson, Sonja Smits, Tonya Lee Williams and Karl Pruner, gathered at Queen's Park today to push for urgent amendments to the *Status of Ontario's Artists Act*.

"This Act makes a mockery of the term Status of the Artist," said Karl Pruner, ACTRA Toronto's President. "After years of hard work by the Culture Minister's own sub-committee on Status of the Artist, all this empty Act contains is a weekend to celebrate artists."

"This vacuous Act is a sorry attempt by the government to check something off their to-do list before the next election. This Act doesn't do the job," said Wendy Crewson.

"We had high hopes when we met with the Culture Minister a year ago. This Act offers nothing more than platitudes. It does nothing to relieve the challenges faced by artists," said Sonja Smits.

"Artists are among the most underpaid workers in our economy and they are without many of the protections and benefits that other workers rely on," said Tonya Lee Williams.

In the 2003 election the Liberals promised to bring in Status of the Artist legislation to address these concerns. For the past three years artists have been working with a special committee set up by the government to do extensive research on these issues.

The Act, as presented, acknowledges the substantial contribution of artists to the economic and social well being of the province but fails to provide any solutions to the challenges they face. It fails to include any of the Culture Minister's own sub-committee's recommendations on Status. Ontario artists have been waiting for a Status of the Artist Act since UNESCO's 1980 recommendation that governments take action for artists.

ACTRA is calling for legislative amendments that include protections for children, income averaging, training, housing support and a process to improve the collective bargaining process for artists.

ACTRA Toronto Performers is the largest organization within ACTRA, representing more than 13,000 of Canada's 21,000 professional performers working in the English-language recorded media in Canada. As an advocate for Canadian culture since 1943, ACTRA is a member-driven organization that continues to secure the rights and respect for the work of professional performers.

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