

December 2, 2024

Ref 369381

Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance
The Honourable Chrystia Freeland
House of Commons
Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0A6
Email: Chrystia.Freeland@fin.gc.ca

Minister of Labour and Seniors
The Honourable Steven MacKinnon
House of Commons
Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0A6
Email: Steven.MacKinnon@parl.gc.ca

Dear Ministers Freeland and MacKinnon,

Thank you for all your work on behalf of Canadian seniors in your role as federal cabinet ministers. As provincial seniors' advocates, we write to you with a shared interest to improve the lives of seniors in our provinces and across Canada. We want to ensure older adults' voices are heard and their issues considered regardless of where they live in the country.

The concerns we would like to express are regarding how the federal government is applying the Working Canadians Rebate by excluding seniors who are not working. While many people struggle with income and affordability issues, low-income seniors face disproportionate barriers, especially single seniors living alone, because they often live on fixed incomes. Therefore, limiting the rebate to Canadians who have claimed tax credits for Canada Pension Plan contributions or Employment Insurance premiums effectively means most seniors will not receive the \$250 rebate to help pay for medical equipment, nutritional supplements, incontinence products, home adaptations and other essential items to support healthy ageing that are not covered under the Canada Health Act.

Our offices have heard from many seniors who are incredibly disappointed that your government has not included them in the rebate program. Seniors across Canada paid taxes for decades while they were working and are due some consideration for making their lives a little easier now as the cost of living continues to rise. While we recognize your government rolled back the retirement age from 67 to 65, and increased the guaranteed income supplement and an increase in Old Age Security payments for Canadians aged 75 and older, many seniors continue to struggle and find the limits of their pension incomes a challenge.

In B.C., where we have some of the highest costs in the country, half of B.C. seniors are living on \$33,830 a year or less, however, median incomes of seniors in other parts of the country are even lower, such as Newfoundland and Labrador (\$27,800) and New Brunswick (\$28,700). Senior renters continue to face unaffordable housing with nearly 40% of senior renters spending more than 30% on their income on housing costs. More seniors are relying on food banks and are the fastest growing group of food bank users above other age groups in Canada.

Accordingly, we ask that the Working Canadians Rebate be expanded to include seniors. Thank you for your consideration of this matter.

Sincerely,



Dan Levitt
Seniors Advocate BC



Kelly Lamrock
Seniors Advocate NB



Susan Walsh
Seniors' Advocate NL
