

Feb 14, 2016

The Honourable William Francis Morneau Minister of Finance

90 Elgin Street

Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0G5

Dear Minister of Finance William Morneau,

As we have all seen over the past 10 years the possibility of bargaining a defined benefit pension plan has been removed from the bargaining tables of Canadian workers, collectively and individually, by corporations that today make workers bargain for their survival instead of bargaining for a share of the profits which they contribute to. Pension experts and pension recipients agree that a defined benefit plan is as dependable as the Canada Pension Plan.

When we see that past governments have been willing to support the corporate lobbying agenda with little regard for the consequences on the standard of living of Canadian citizens, First Nations and the environment we are reluctant to trust that their approach to these issues will be different today.

There are however a number of reasons for hope.

We have elected a new majority government that has given us a long list of commitments for “Real Change”.

More people, every day, understand that it is not our health care spending or our education spending that is unsustainable. It is the inequitable financial structure, the contributors to global warming, the continuing path of the destruction of ecosystems that global capital continues to dictate to us that is unsustainable.

We need more than little fixes to specific issues. We need a clear and substantial change in direction. Our government is elected by Canadians voters, not corporations so the compromising of Canada’s sovereignty through Free Trade agreements and the ISDS dispute resolution mechanism could be considered to be treasonous behaviour. Despite the promises of jobs and prosperity past free trade agreements have not delivered. The well being of Canada and indeed the world must shift to a focus based on community as opposed to individuals. It may seem grandiose to dream so big but that is what is required today.

Therefore the aging Canadians that make up the National Pensioners Federation with a membership of over a million seniors submit the following for your consideration:

- 1) Take concrete action to address the growing inequality of the distribution of wealth in Canada;
 - a) by changing tax laws that currently allow numerous ways to avoid paying the legislated tax rate on monies earned in Canada. It is estimated that 100-170 billion dollars leaves Canada every year untaxed.
 - b) create a National Manufacturing Policy which will provide the framework for business to process our raw materials with the use of Canadian labour.

Both of these efforts will increase revenue and provide economic growth. It is clear that focusing on expenses and reducing services is not working in the interests of the majority of Canadians.

- 2) Implement pension changes.
 - a) Restore OAS eligibility to age 65.
 - b) Increase OAS and GIS
 - c) Modify the “cost of living allowance” formula to be dominated by items that are the most common expenses of seniors.
 - d) Increase the CPP.
 - e) follow through on the election commitment to protecting the existing pensions and pension credits that Canadians have worked for and contributed to. This means no retroactive changes to current pensions or the status of current pension credits.

The first three recommendations will benefit all current and future retirees. Recommendation d) will benefit future retirees as they struggle to plan during a time that continues to reduce the availability of defined benefit pension plans. Recommendation e) will provide sustainability for current pension incomes.

- 3) Implement Health Care reform
 - a) renegotiate the Health Accord
 - b) reconstitute the Health Council of Canada
 - c) implement a National Pharmacare Program
 - d) implement a National Home Care Strategy
 - e) implement a National Dental Program

The Canada Health Accord and the Health Council are necessary to ensure that provinces can and do have the ability to provide a high national standard of health care. Tying the transfer payments to GDP will not provide the stability to plan and implement the health care system which aging Canadians need.

4) Implement a National Housing Strategy

Canada is still the only G7 country that does not have a National Housing Strategy. Studies have show for some time that housing is a major predeterminate of health.

Please note that I am available for further discussion at your convenience.

Herb John

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Herb John', written in a cursive style.

President ,
National Pensioners Federation.