



**Newfoundland and Labrador
Public Sector Pensioners' Association**

446 Newfoundland Drive, Suite 206
(Phone) 709-754-5730
pensioners@nlpspa.ca

St. John's, NL A1A 4G7
(Fax) 709-754-5790
www.nlpspa.ca

**&
Newfoundland & Labrador Coalition of
Seniors, Pensioners, and Retirees Associations/Groups**

January 27, 2020

The Honourable Deb Schulte
Minister of Seniors
Deb.Schulte@parl.gc.ca

Re: National Seniors Strategy

Dear Minister Schulte:

On behalf of the Newfoundland & Labrador Public Sector Pensioners' Association (NLPSPA) and the Coalition of Seniors, Pensioners, and Retirees Associations, I want to extend congratulations to you on your appointment to the position of Minister of Seniors. Our Coalition was pleased when the Government decided to create this position in 2018 and as the second Minister to hold this portfolio, we look forward to working with you directly and through our MP's and trust that we can bring issues to your attention for action that will better the lives of older persons in Canada.

First of all, let me briefly tell you a little bit about our Coalition. Our Coalition is comprised of 14 seniors' organizations including the NLPSPA, with membership growing and other groups affiliating with our leadership. The purpose of our Coalition is to explore common issues that impact the quality of life of older persons, seniors, and retirees in this province. We speak with a united voice to our Federal MP's and Provincial Government Officials who have the responsibility and accountability to hear and address the concerns of seniors. Our ongoing discussions with these government individuals include the topics of home care services, long term care provisions, better health care, services to age at home, income security, poverty amongst seniors, homelessness, and services to aboriginal persons and veterans.

The Coalition has read your Mandate Letter and is pleased with the direction and actions that the Prime Minister has established for you. We have also cross referenced the Mandate Letters for other Ministers whose portfolios interact with yours to ensure we are fully knowledgeable of the directions that have been established and the extent of any parameters applied to your work.

The primary purpose for our outreach to you now is to re-emphasize the need for a National Seniors' Strategy for Canada.

We were disappointed to see your Mandate Letter and the Speech from the Throne did not articulate the development of a holistic National Seniors Strategy that would optimize health, financial security, and social inclusion so all Canadians can age with dignity. There are many reasons why we feel a National Seniors' Strategy is important, including but not limited to the fact that Canadians are living longer, the standards of care are inconsistent across the country, and the national picture of reported cases of abuse of seniors and other vulnerable persons in residential care is unacceptable and shameful.

Our Coalition acknowledges with agreement that as Minister of Seniors, you have been directed to work with the Minister of Justice and the Attorney General to strengthen Canada's approach to elder abuse and we are thankful for this long overdue piece of work.

While all of the directions for the Minister of Seniors are welcomed, we still remain concerned that these instructions, while well intentioned, are a collection of actions that are happening piecemeal. Without a unifying National Seniors Strategy, there is not a vision, principles, or foundation that will guide you, your colleagues, and your staff in the work of your portfolio.

Our Coalition is well aware of **Motion M-106 Seniors** presented by MP Marc Serré on February 24, 2017, but note that following the Motion's presentation, it was dropped to the bottom of the order of precedence on the Order Paper. As no mention was made in the Mandate Letter for your predecessor, Minister Tassi, and for you, we are concerned that the need for this overarching strategy is being lost in the ongoing business of your portfolio.

Again, let me congratulate you on your appointment and wish you well in your position. I trust you will give serious consideration to our position for a National Seniors Strategy. I can be reached at the included emails of pensioners@npspa.ca or sharronc@nl.rogers.com or by calling 709-690-1238 (C).

Sharron Callahan

Sharron Callahan

Chair, NL Coalition of Pensioners, Retirees, and Seniors Associations

C.c. NL Federal MP's

C.c. NL Seniors Coalition