

Minister of
Seniors



Ministre des
Aînés

Ottawa, Canada K1A 0J9

Ms. Sharron Callahan
Chair
Newfoundland and Labrador Public Sector Pensioners' Association
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MAR 03 2020

Dear Ms. Callahan:

I am responding to your correspondence of January 21, 2020, concerning the name of the Old Age Security (OAS) program, as well as your email of January 27, 2020, regarding the development of a national seniors strategy.

Thank you for taking the time to write and for your congratulations on my appointment as Minister of Seniors. I appreciate your thoughtfulness and support. I am delighted that you have read the mandate letter I received from the Right Honourable Justin Trudeau, Prime Minister of Canada, upon my appointment. I also appreciate your perspective on my mandate.

Our government values the contribution that seniors have made and continue to make to our country, communities, workplaces and families. In my role as Minister of Seniors, I help our government better understand the needs of Canadian seniors, and work to ensure that programs and services are developed that respond to Canada's aging population. This can only be done by listening to seniors, their families, and other individuals and stakeholders, such as the Newfoundland and Labrador Public Sector Pensioners' Association (NLPSPA), who aim to improve the quality of life of seniors.

With respect to NLPSPA's views on the name of the OAS program, the term "old age" has been associated with the name of programs for Canadian seniors since the introduction of the *Old Age Pensions Act* in 1927, and its successor, the *Old Age Security Act* in 1952. Originally, the OAS pension was paid to eligible Canadians 70 years of age or older, but the eligibility was gradually expanded to include all those aged 65 and above.

In your correspondence, you suggested that the name be changed to "Seniors Security Program." Your perspective on the term "old age" is one that is indeed shared by many seniors who themselves do not feel old. However, it could be inferred that by removing the term "old age" from the program title, the Government is suggesting that there is something wrong with being older. The advantages of changing the name are offset by its strong name recognition and the fact that Canadians identify with it in a positive manner.

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Concerning the development of a national seniors strategy, our government has asked the National Seniors Council to consider federal, provincial and territorial initiatives underway in support of seniors, and provide advice on any gaps and thus potential areas of focus for a national seniors strategy. The National Seniors Council is mandated to advise the federal government on issues important to the well-being of seniors and, in developing this advice, to consult with Canadians and be informed by evidence.

Should you wish to share your views with the Council, you can send an email to nc-nsc-cna@hrsdc-rhdcc.gc.ca. I look forward to the Council's advice, as this is a very important matter.

Addressing the issues seniors face requires widespread cooperation. Meaningful contributions are needed from a broad coalition of stakeholders, such as the NLPSPA. Our government looks forward to continuing to work with provinces, territories, all members of Parliament, and other key stakeholders to support Canada's seniors of today and tomorrow.

Listening to Newfoundlanders and Labradorians, and all Canadians, is one of the most important parts of my job and your thoughts help to inform our government's policies and priorities.

Please feel free to reach out should you have any further questions or concerns.

Yours sincerely,



The Honourable Deb Schulte, P.C., M.P.
Minister of Seniors

c.c. The Honourable Carla Qualtrough, P.C., M.P.
Minister of Employment, Workforce Development and Disability Inclusion

The Honourable Ahmed Hussen, P.C., M.P.
Minister of Families, Children and Social Development

Mr. Scott Simms, M.P.
Coast of Bays–Central–Notre Dame

Mr. Ken McDonald, M.P.
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