



News Release

Open Letter from Senators to Prime Minister, Deputy PM and Finance Minister Calls for Minimum Basic Income

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

OTTAWA, TUESDAY, APRIL 21, 2020—Today 50 members of the Senate of Canada from across affiliations and regions wrote to the Prime Minister, Deputy Prime Minister and Finance Minister commending them for the government’s actions to date and calling for further evolution of the Canada Emergency Response Benefit (CERB) in order to implement a minimum basic income.

Since introducing the CERB in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the government has continued to evolve this program to provide income support of \$500 per week to more Canadians in need. Senators have heard from Canadians that further positive developments to the CERB are needed in order to stop other groups of Canadians from falling through the cracks.

Restructuring the CERB as a minimum basic income would quickly get support to Canadians in dire straits who need assistance now. Doing so would also free up valuable time and resources needed to craft and implement further changes to the CERB and to renew eligibility of individuals for the CERB in the next months and beyond.

Each new fix to the CERB, while welcome, means delays in getting help to those who need it most. As a matter both of social equity and efficiency, Senators are joining the calls of Canadians across the country to ensure that, in this time of need, no one falls through the cracks and everyone has their place on “Team Canada”.

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