



*The Honourable Marilou McPhedran, Rosemary Moodie,  
Kim Pate and Chantal Petitclerc, Senators*

## **Statement**

### **Senators Call on the Government to Honour Its Promises to Lift Persons with Disabilities Out of Poverty**

*FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE*

June 8, 2023 (Ottawa) – As Minister Qualtrough reminded us, Canada is facing a once-in-a-generation opportunity to lift many working-age Canadians with disabilities out of poverty by passing Bill C-22 and developing and implementing a Canada Disability Benefit. We call on the government to not let this moment slip by.

The government has been clear that redressing economic inequality for persons with disabilities is an urgent matter and has encouraged legislators to pass this bill quickly. The Senate worked hard to respond to calls from members of the disability community to advance Bill C-22 expeditiously while also strengthening it in key ways.

Senate amendments to the bill include new requirements that when developed, the benefit will be:

- Protected from clawbacks by private insurance companies, so that it reaches those in need and is not diverted to companies;
- Equipped with a process by which individuals can appeal decisions made about their eligibility for the benefit and the amount they ought to receive;
- Calculated taking into account not just Canada's official poverty line but also the additional costs of living with a disability, systemic ableist barriers to accessing work, intersectional needs, and Canada's international human rights obligations;

- Implemented as soon as possible, by requiring all necessary regulations for the roll out of the benefit to be in place within 12 months of the coming into force of the bill and making technical amendments to give effect to the House of Commons' intentions regarding its coming into force date.

These important additions have been awaiting approval by the House of Commons for three weeks. Only two weeks remain until the House is expected to rise for the summer, with no confirmation yet of when the government intends to bring Bill C-22 forward for consideration in the House.

Bill C-22 was announced in 2020. After a previous version of the legislation was introduced but never debated, it was finally introduced in Parliament in 2022, where it eventually spent eight months in the House of Commons. In contrast, the Senate has conducted its own comprehensive study, including more days of chamber debate, and almost double the amount of committee study, in little more than three months' time. Senators have clearly responded to the pleas for urgent action. Now the government must act and finally deliver on its promise to the disability community by passing this desperately needed bill into law

We call on the government to honour the trust that members of the disability community have been asked to place in this legislative process. We call on the government to act urgently to pass Bill C-22, including its important Senate additions. Persons with disabilities in need and struggling to afford basic necessities should not have to wait one second more for relief from poverty.

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**For more information:**

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