

Ottawa

Room 519, Confederation Building
Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0A6
Tel.: 613-943-2180
Fax: 613-993-5577

Constituency

126 Ingram Street Suite 101
Duncan, British Columbia V9L 1P1
Tel: 1-866-609-9998
Fax: 250-746-2354



Alistair MacGregor

Member of Parliament/Député
Cowichan-Malahat-Langford
Alistair.MacGregor@parl.gc.ca

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Pièce 519, Édifice de la Confédération
Ottawa (Ontario) K1A 0A6
Tél: 613-943-2180
Télé: 613-993-5577

Circonscription

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June 23, 2016

The Honourable Kent Hehr
Minister of Veterans Affairs
House of Commons
Ottawa, ON K1A 0A6

Dear Minister Hehr,

I am writing to you in your capacity as Minister of Veterans Affairs on behalf of constituents of my riding and all Canadian veterans regarding the urgent need to improve services and restore lifelong pensions for our veterans.

I want to offer my support for your recently voiced commitment to implement all the items in the mandate given to you by the prime minister. I request that you complete the mandate to re-establish lifelong pensions for our injured veterans immediately, so no more of our veterans and their families continue to suffer as a result of the previous Conservative government's decision to end lifelong pensions. The fact that federal government lawyers are arguing that the government has no extraordinary obligation to those who have fought for our country has made many veterans feel a sense of betrayal. The Liberal party made commitments to veterans during the election and the Liberal party also supported an NDP motion in the 41st Parliament that recognized the existence of a covenant of moral, social, legal, and fiduciary obligation to Canadian veterans.

As you know, recent veterans have a higher prevalence of mental health problems than ever before, and they are more likely than the average Canadian to suffer from PTSD. Lump-sum payments as opposed to lifelong pensions have not provided veterans with the resources and support they clearly need. In 2014, we faced a crisis as the number of reports of suicides in the armed forces drastically increased. It is critical we increase mental health education and access to services for those in need.

Veterans have earned our respect and gratitude. The government must recognize Canada's moral, social, legal and financial covenant with veterans. I ask you to ensure that veterans receive the respect, support, care, and economic opportunities they deserve and are entitled to by immediately increasing investments in access to mental health services and re-instating lifelong pensions.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

Alistair MacGregor, MP
Cowichan – Malahat – Langford

cc: Constituents
cc : Irene Mathyssen, MP, NDP Critic for Veterans Affairs

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