



Keeping in Touch

Kate Young M.P.
London West

SUPPORTING CANADA'S VETERANS

July 2016

Dear Friends,

Canada's veterans and their families deserve our care, compassion and respect. To better support veterans where they live, **the Government will re-open and staff service offices** that were closed by the previous government in Charlottetown, Sydney, Corner Brook, Windsor, Thunder Bay, Saskatoon, Brandon, Prince George and Kelowna. We will also open an additional office in Surrey, and expand outreach to veterans in the North by working with local partners. This will make it easier for veterans to access services across the country.

We are also hiring additional case managers to reduce the client-to-case manager ratio to no more than 25:1. Case managers represent the first line of intervention to help veterans in their rehabilitation process and to coordinate referrals to health care providers. Reducing the client-to-case manager ratio will help veterans make successful transitions to civilian life.

Improving Financial Supports for Veterans

The Government is also updating the Veterans Charter to meet the needs of modern-day veterans.

Significant new investments include:

- **Increasing the Disability Award** (maximum increased to \$360,000 in 2017) for injuries or illnesses caused or worsened by military service and aligning it to other benefits by indexing it to inflation;
- **Expanding access to higher grades of the Permanent Impairment Allowance** to better support veterans who have had their career options limited by a service-related illness or injury. The benefit will also be renamed Career Impact Allowance to better reflect the intent of the program; and
- **Increasing the Earnings Loss Benefit** from 75% to 90% of a member's pre-release military salary to provide income replacement for injured veterans participating in Veterans Affairs Canada's rehabilitation or vocational assistance program as they prepare to re-enter the work force. Every injured veteran will receive 90% of their pre-release salary or the minimum amount of \$44,496 per year, pre-tax.

These measures represent a significant investment that will greatly improve income support to disabled veterans, including both veterans transitioning to the civilian workforce as well as those with injuries preventing them from suitable and gainful employment. In particular these measures will ensure that disabled veterans who are unable to return to the workforce because of their injuries receive higher lifelong support.

Last Post Fund

The Government also has a duty to remember the service and sacrifice of those who served in the military. The Last Post Fund program provides financial assistance to the estates of eligible deceased veterans towards the cost of burial and for funeral services. To expand eligibility for the program to more families of low-income veterans, we are increasing the estate exemption for the Last Post Fund from roughly \$12,000 to roughly \$35,000, and will apply an annual cost of living adjustment to the estate exemption going forward.

Commemoration

We will also merge the Community War Memorial Program with the Commemorative Partnership Program, and expand the scope of the Commemorative Partnership Program to allow funding for the building of new community war memorials. This will streamline the application process for Canadians and community groups to gain access to funding opportunities available for commemorative activities for veterans.

Invictus Games

On March 16, His Royal Highness Prince Henry of Wales announced that Toronto will host the 2017 Invictus Games for ill and injured veterans. The Invictus Games is an international sporting event that promotes the well-being and rehabilitation of our veteran population, and the Government is proud to show its support for the organization of the Games in Canada. Budget 2016 proposes to reallocate \$4 million of funding and provide an additional \$6 million in funding to support organization of the Games.

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