



HOUSE OF COMMONS
CHAMBRE DES COMMUNES
CANADA

Rachel Blaney

Member of Parliament
North Island-Powell River

The Honourable Lawrence MacAulay
Minister of Veterans Affairs
Via Email

Ottawa ON
May 4, 2020

RE: COVID-19 – Support for Veterans Service Providers

Dear Minister,

I have heard from a number of organizations in my riding and across the country who provide services to veterans. Many of them are struggling financially right now because their members are unable to attend and use regular in-person services, donations have dried up, or they are unable to rent their spaces out due to current restrictions. Many of these organizations do not qualify for current business or not-for-profit supports.

In addition, these organizations provide extremely important and necessary services to our veterans. Some assist with homelessness, addiction counseling, or mental health supports, others help veterans navigate Veterans Affairs Canada (VAC) applications, and some simply offer a place where veterans can gather and find a place in their community. In my riding of North Island – Powell River, there are eleven Legions that provide support to local veterans and their entire communities. Losing those community hubs would be devastating, especially in more rural and remote areas.

Some parent organizations, such as the British Columbia/Yukon Command of the Royal Canadian Legion, are supporting their local service providers as best they can. I am concerned for those who don't have the capacity to offer this level of support, and even for those receiving it that it won't be enough.

I am asking that you, as the Minister responsible for the wellbeing of Canadian veterans, create a fund specifically for these organizations to weather the pandemic.

Given that this week marks the 75th anniversary of the liberation of the Netherlands, the liberation of Germany, and the end of WWII in Europe, I hope you agree that the right thing to

do is to honour our veterans by ensuring they have the supports they need when this newest challenge is over.

Neither you nor I are in Europe this week as planned to commemorate these historic events. I had been looking forward to them for a long time, but like many other events this year they had to be cancelled for the health and wellbeing of all of those involved. The least we can do in place of that is to help keep veterans service organizations afloat.

Please don't hesitate to reach out if there is any way I can help make this a reality.

Sincerely,



Rachel Blaney, Member of Parliament
North Island-Powell River

Ottawa

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