

March 15, 2024

The Right Honourable Justin Trudeau  
Prime Minister

The Honourable Chrystia Freeland  
Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance

**Re: Immediate Funding for the Canada Disability Benefit**

Prime Minister and Deputy Prime Minister:

We the undersigned are reaching out to you today to stress the importance of a timely decision to fund the Canada Disability Benefit (CDB) for a substantive and meaningful amount that will achieve the policy goals of the Act. The 2020 Speech from the Throne committed to create the CDB with the intent to lift tens of thousands of Canadians with disabilities out of deep poverty. This affordability measure enjoyed unanimous all-party support throughout the legislative process and is favoured by 89% of Canadians who were surveyed in 2021.

Statistics Canada tells us that 27% of our population self-identify as having at least one significant disability. Over 8 million Canadians make up this powerful voting demographic, with significant numbers in every single one of our ridings. During the HUMA and SOCI committee hearings for Bill C-22, we heard first-hand the gut-wrenching stories of people with disabilities who are attempting to live on woefully inadequate social supports and forced to make decisions on a daily basis that none of us would consider reasonable.

The CDB is a legacy social policy for this government similarly to Canada Pension Plan, Canada Child Benefit and \$10 per day Early Learning and Child Care, but it must be funded at an amount that makes a difference in those lives of the people that need it the most. This is next step that we must take to strengthen our social security net and truly build an inclusive economy that works for everyone.

A meaningful CDB will enable people with disabilities to participate in the labour force, grow our economy, have better health outcomes, and be full participants in all aspects of society and our communities.

The lingering effects of the pandemic and increasing cost of living have made this affordability measure essential for all those with a disability, but especially those in rural, remote and northern communities. We recognize the need to make fiscal considerations important in this upcoming Budget, but those with a disability can no longer be pushed aside. Too often people with a disability have been ignored and marginalized, and we as a government must make the commitment to act decisively to say – no more.

Since forming government, supporting the most vulnerable and making life more affordable has been at the forefront of everything we do. It is our Liberal brand. We have taken the time to listen to the disability community and we have made commitments to support them, but we need to meet the moment. They are counting on us to deliver. The time is now. We cannot lose the trust of Canadians after years of work in this space.

Prime Minister and Deputy Prime Minister, we need a Canada Disability Benefit now. Canadians are expecting to see it featured in the upcoming budget. The disability community has been relentless in their advocacy for decades and they are looking to us for leadership. We need a meaningful amount to cement our government's legacy as the one who cares about its most vulnerable citizens.

Respectfully,



Pam Damoff, MP  
Oakville North–Burlington

Tim Louis, MP  
Kitchener–Conestoga

Wayne Long, MP  
Saint John–Rothesay



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