

The Hon. Seamus O'Regan Jr.
Minister of Labour and Seniors
Parliament of Canada
House of Commons
Ottawa, ON K1A 0A6
August 8, 2023
Via email: seamus.oregan@parl.gc.ca



Dear Minister O'Regan,

Congratulations on your [recent appointment as Minister of Labour and Seniors](#). The [Canadian Coalition Against Ageism \(CCAA\)](#), and its expanding membership of Pan-Canadian partners, representing over 10.5 million older Canadians, proudly join together under the leadership of the [International Longevity Centre Canada \(ILC Canada\)](#) to convey our best wishes to you.

CCAA is a nation-wide social change movement to combat ageism against older people while protecting and strengthening their human rights. CCAA's vision is a Canada free of ageism against older persons.

The COVID-19 pandemic laid bare the disturbing escalation of human rights violations perpetrated on older persons globally. Residents in [Canadian long term care homes \(LTC\)](#) were denied fundamental rights to life and health and accounted for a staggering 81% of C-19 deaths early in the pandemic. In Ontario, the [More Beds Better Care Act](#), dealt a devastating blow to the autonomy of older citizens, by depriving them of their right to choose their place of residence and allowing for relocations away from families and vital community supports. Ageism lies at the core of the serious rights violations faced by older Canadians, leading to significant repercussions for their health and well-being. These violations also burden healthcare and public safety systems already under strain. The prevalence and trajectory of these violations worsen the adverse effects on older individuals' health, while also escalating associated costs. Although numerous examples demonstrate the persistence of age-based human rights abuses, it's challenging to list them all here.

Prime Minister Justin Trudeau in his remarks July 26th, indicated these are *'difficult times for millions of Canadians, especially seniors'*. The Canadian government must respond decisively to these needs and challenges faced by older citizens. *'Getting through these consequential times and building a better future for everyone'* means older Canadians cannot be forgotten.

As Canada undergoes a significant demographic shift, with the number of older persons projected to double in the coming decades, it is crucial that we adopt a proactive approach and act now to support those most vulnerable. We must collectively intensify our efforts to not only protect the rights of older persons but also recognize that each one of us has a role to play in safeguarding them from harm. Older Canadians comprise a diverse group, desiring to remain healthy, secure, engaged, and active contributors to society. Therefore, we must uphold their right to be valued members of society, making meaningful social and economic contributions throughout their entire lives.

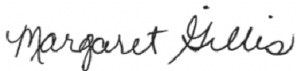
Canada's candidacy for the Human Rights Council is an excellent opportunity to play that leadership role on older persons rights, in tackling human rights violations on a global scale, yet older persons are not listed as priority populations in Canada's application. We hope you will support us in righting that omission.

It is very important to recognize and appreciate the invaluable contributions made by Minister Kamal Khera and Ambassador Rae during their involvement in the UN's Core Group of the Open Ended Working Group on Aging (OEWGA) this past April. We trust that you too will join us in continuing the work they started by attending UN OEWGA14 in March 2024. We offer our immediate support to address any questions you might have as preparations are already underway for OEWGA 14.

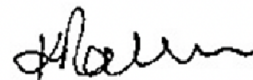
CCAA strongly supports the development and implementation of a United Nations convention on the rights of older persons which would provide a legally binding instrument to address the egregious human rights violations older persons experience. Political will and visionary leadership are crucial in bringing about significant social change, combating deeply entrenched ageism, and protecting and strengthening the human rights of older persons. Canada has a pivotal role to play in making this a reality. Under your leadership, as Minister of Seniors, we ask that you recognize older persons as a priority and endorse our call for a UN convention, because we strongly believe Canada can and must play a significant leadership role in this regard.

Please accept our most sincere congratulations and know that the CCAA stands ready to support you in your role, advocating for seniors' issues. CCAA's membership is confident, that together we can ensure older Canadians have a strong voice, feel safe and respected and can enjoy the quality of life they so richly deserve for generations to come. With this spirit, we invite you to meet with us to further develop previously established collaborative opportunities with the Minister for Seniors and will reach out to your office to follow up.

Sincerely,



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ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF PARTNERS

