



**Association canadienne des enseignantes et des enseignants retraités
Canadian Association of Retired Teachers**

February 17, 2020

Dear ACER-CART Directors, Presidents and Executive Directors

I was invited to attend a meeting in Wolfville on February 11, 2020, to hear an announcement from the Federal Government on investing in seniors. Federal Minister of Seniors Deb Schulte was in Nova Scotia from February 10 to 12, 2020 to announce that \$1.4 million was allocated to Nova Scotia under the New Horizons Grant for Seniors to support 77 projects.

Minister Schulte also spoke on other seniors issues and I provide some of the topics she mentioned:

- The Minister is working with Minister of Health Patty Hajdu on the implementation of a National Pharmacare Plan
- The Minister is working on a National Housing Strategy for Seniors to allow them to continue to live and age in their communities
- The Minister's department has started working on a National Dementia Strategy
- Government will enhance and strengthen the Canada Pension Plan (CPP) to raise the maximum by up to 50%
- Government will increase OAS and GIS at age 75 and it will be indexed to inflation thereafter
- Government will enhance the Wage Earner Protection Plan by making changes to the "clawback" provisions for those who wish to continue working after age 65
- Government will protect pension plans by giving courts greater ability to withhold executive compensation and shareholder payouts if this contributes to bankruptcy and underfunding of pension obligations
- The Minister indicated she is working on combatting social isolation for seniors in rural areas by looking into funding for transportation, internet accessibility and recreation facilities

I spent ten minutes speaking to the Minister privately about our four election issues and she seemed a good listener. The Minister indicated that she chaired the 40 members Liberal Seniors Caucus during the 2015-2019 Parliament. She agreed that a National Pharmacare Program is vital for all Canadians. I also indicated that ACER-CART was disappointed that a National Seniors Strategy was not in her mandate letter, but she indicated that government is committed to providing more funding to homecare, palliative care and setting national standards for access to mental health services.

I also spoke to the Minister about pension and income security and the work ACER-CART has been doing over the past year, in particular our e-petition 2039 and our strong opposition to Bill C-27. She indicated she was personally opposed to changing one's defined benefit

pension plan to a shared risk pension plan and did not think government would bring back Bill C-27.

I asked if the Minister could speak at our Annual General Meeting on June 5, 2020, and she requested that I work with her Executive Assistant on her schedule of events at that time. She certainly seemed keen on speaking when I indicated how many members are in ACER-CART.

All in all I found Minister Schulte engaged, outgoing and personable and very much aware of seniors' issues in her portfolio.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Bill Berryman".

Bill Berryman
President