



May 3, 2018  
Ottawa, Ontario

Hon. Ralph Goodale, P.C., M.P.  
Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness  
House of Commons  
Ottawa, ON  
K1A 0A6

Dear Minister;

On March 28, 2018, the Public Service Alliance of Canada (PSAC) released details of a tentative agreement reached between the Treasury Board of Canada and the FB bargaining team representing Border Service Officers of the Canada Border Service Agency (CBSA).

According to the statement released by PSAC, front-line officers classed as FB-03 will receive an overall pensionable increase of 17.5% to the job rate over the four (4) period covered by the agreement - from 2014 to June 2018 – bringing the FB-03 job rate to over \$82,400 effective June 2017.

Border Service Officers perform a vital role every day protecting our borders at points of entry via land, sea and air, and we are happy to see that their contribution to Canada's security has been recognized and rewarded with a very significant wage and benefit increase.

While we view the wage settlement for CBSA as fully justified, we remain severely dissatisfied with the inadequate rate of compensation for RCMP officers, and with the failure of the Government of Canada to hire more officers to fill the high number of current vacancies.

As I noted to you in my letters of April 10, 2017 and February 18, 2018, RCMP officers across the country are overworked, understaffed and underpaid. Staff shortages are seeing officers being obligated to work extended overtime hours in efforts to field more officers on patrol, and the effect upon the officers' physical and mental health is predictably adverse.

This notwithstanding, your office has been effectively silent in responding to criticism about the understaffing of the RCMP, which the Force has publicly acknowledged to include 1339 funded vacancies (6.6% of the 20,214 funded positions), and over 1,000 officers (5.5%) off duty on long-term sick leave, maternity or paternity leave.

"K" Division (Alberta) was 230 officers understaffed in 2017/2018 according to RCMP figures; "E" Division (British Columbia) was operating with 483 fewer officers than were funded. (CTV News report of August 14, 2017).

These vacancies have a cost. RCMP officers are paying the price for this with their health. We owe it to these officers to do better.

In response to the CTV News report, your spokesperson, Scott Bardsley, is reported as having said that the government has already provided "integrity funding" for temporary support and is reviewing a report by KPMG into the RCMP's resources.

We will be grateful to hear, Minister, details of that "integrity funding", to know expressly what it was intended to achieve, as well as hearing about the specific focus of the KPMG report, its conclusions respecting RCMP resources and your response.

The Government of Canada and your office, Minister, deserve credit for investments made in support of officers' mental health as announced in the February 2018 federal budget, and other complimentary support to officers and the first responder community via such institutions as the Canadian Institute for Public Safety Research and Treatment (CIPSRT) whose work we acknowledge and applaud. Thank you.

But investment in mental health support is not a substitute for providing the RCMP with the resources they need to hire more officers. The staff shortages themselves create a work environment that exhausts officers and makes them more susceptible to chronic fatigue and illness. We need more officers on patrol.



In his May 2017 report, *Mental Health Support for Members – Royal Canadian Mounted Police* - the Auditor General of Canada reported that the RCMP did not have access to mental health support that met their needs. The AG credited the RCMP with *taking the important step of introducing a mental health strategy*, but noted that the RCMP *failed to make implementation of the selected mental health programs and services a priority, and it did not commit the necessary resources to support them*. We know the RCMP attaches great importance to the health of their personnel, so we can only conclude that their mental health strategy program is inadequately funded by the Government of Canada. This needs to be rectified. \$21.4 million over five years was announced in the February 2018 federal budget for RCMP mental health funding but no specifics were offered. Can you please inform us of what those funds are intended for?

As it concerns compensation, the salary increases authorized by Treasury Board for RCMP in 2017 – 4.8% for FY 2015 and 2016 - which the Government of Canada characterized as *‘reasonable for RCMP members, and a prudent use of public funds’* were insufficient and deeply disappointing.

We observe, of course, that the wage agreement that CBSA has just reached with Treasury Board was accomplished with the benefit of a collective bargaining agent who worked on CBSA’s behalf for four years, before achieving this significant result.

The certification of a bargaining agent for RCMP is on the horizon, and in time, they will benefit from professional representation negotiating on their behalf. But we know that the process itself will take time. Time is not an advantage the officers have. We hope, Minister, that the Government of Canada will not economize at the expense of officers, and use the time lag between certification and the establishment of the RCMP’s collective bargaining agent, as an excuse not to provide officers with fair and competitive compensation now, while contingency funds are set aside, to be used for future labour negotiations.

As noted in my April 10, 2017 letter, Minister, the RCMP Veterans’ Association once again urges you to immediately communicate to your colleague, the President of the Treasury Board, the urgent need to implement the recommendation of the now-defunct RCMP Pay Council (“Fair Compensation for the RCMP”), to raise Regular Member pay to the average of the top three of the eight comparator police agencies on a total compensation basis. An immediate increase of 10% is warranted to bring RCMP in closer parity within the police universe.

A new era has begun for the RCMP with the appointment of Commissioner Brenda Lucki. Once again, Minister, we implore you to provide RCMP officers with fair compensation, and we ask you to provide the Force with the resources it needs to continue its essential work for Canadians to keep our communities safe. The challenges ahead are many. Investing now will give strength and energy to finding solutions.

Sincerely,



Al Rivard  
President  
RCMP Veterans' Association

c.c. Rt. Hon. Justin Trudeau, P.C., M.P., Prime Minister  
c.c. Hon. William Morneau, Minister of Finance  
c.c. Hon. Scott Brison, President of the Treasury Board  
c.c. Hon. Seamus O'Regan, Minister of Veterans Affairs  
c.c. Hon. Wayne Easter - Chair, Standing Committee on Finance  
c.c. Hon. Andrew Scheer - Leader of the Opposition  
c.c. Hon. Elizabeth May - Leader of the Green Party of Canada  
c.c. Mr. Jagmeet Singh, Leader of the New Democratic Party  
c.c. Senator Gwen Boniface - Chair, Standing Committee - National Security and Defence  
c.c. Commissioner Brenda Lucki - RCMP