



Ottawa, Ontario
December 17, 2018

Hon. Ralph Goodale
Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness
House of Commons
Ottawa, Ontario
Canada
K1A 0A6

Dear Minister

I write to you today, Minister, concerning two (2) priorities within the mandate letter issued by the Prime Minister to the Minister of Veterans Affairs and Associate Minister of National Defence that have direct relevance to and impact upon veterans of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police and their families.

On October 4, 2017, Prime Minister Trudeau tasked Minister Seamus O'Regan to "work with your colleagues and through established legislative, regulatory and Cabinet processes" in order to deliver on his top priorities which include;

- Increase the Veteran survivor's pension amount from 50 percent to 70 percent
- Eliminate the 'marriage after 60' claw-back clause, so that surviving spouses of Veterans receive appropriate pension and health benefits

We were very pleased to see that the Prime Minister recognizes these issues for the significant financial burden they represent - in application - upon the surviving spouses of Veterans who have served Canada faithfully.

As heartened as we are to see that the Prime Minister has directed that these matters be resolved, you will appreciate, Minister, we are deeply concerned that the

same priorities have not been replicated in the mandate letter that the Prime Minister issued to you.

These matters have exactly the same derogatory effect, and impose the same financial jeopardy upon the surviving spouses of RCMP members as they do upon the surviving spouses of personnel of the Canadian Armed Forces.

The surviving spouses of RCMP Veterans are equally disadvantaged by a survivor's benefit at a rate of 50% that obligates many to significantly alter their lifestyle and standard of living, to adapt to such a substantial decrease in annual income. Increasing the survivor's benefit to 70% as the Prime Minister has directed for military veterans, will enable surviving spouses to maintain the standard of living that they enjoyed when their spouse was alive.

In terms of the 'marriage after 60' clause, it is anticipated that this clause was put in place when life expectancies were lower than present day, in Canada, where men are now expected to live to age 80.9 and women to age 84.7, according to the World Health Organization.

Marriages of veterans occurring after they have reached the age of 60 can reasonably be expected to endure for 20 years or more, based on current life expectancies.

The Prime Minister has clearly recognized this reality of present day demographics and rightfully judged that penalizing marriages of Veterans that occur after age 60 is unfair and prejudicial.

As Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness with responsibility for the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, and by extension, Veterans of the RCMP, we ask Minister, that you please confirm to us that you will work with your colleague, the Minister of Veterans Affairs, and other Cabinet colleagues, to ensure that achievement of the articulated mandate priorities to

- (i) Increase the Veteran survivor's pension amount from 50 percent to 70 percent, and
- (ii) Eliminate the 'marriage after 60' claw-back clause, so that surviving spouses of Veterans receive appropriate pension and health benefits

are equally applied to Veterans of the RCMP and their surviving spouses.

We trust that you will safeguard the interests of our Veterans, Minister, in these regards and look forward to hearing from you on this.

With warmest regards,

Steve Walker

Steve Walker
President
RCMP Veterans' Association

c.c. Rt. Hon. Justin Trudeau, Prime Minister of Canada
c.c. Hon. Seamus O'Regan, Minister of Veterans Affairs and Associate Minister of
National Defence
c.c. Commissioner Brenda Lucki, RCMP