

SPEAK UP

In 2015, Canadians will head to the polls. The 2015 federal election is a perfect opportunity for retirees to be heard and understood. The National Association of Federal Retirees (NAFR) is strictly non-partisan; however the Association may sometimes take issue with a particular policy or position taken by the federal government or a political candidate regardless of party affiliation.

Recently, the current federal government indicated its intention to introduce legislation which could allow Crown Corporations and federally-regulated employers to reduce pension benefits and limit indexation for pensioners, even after they have retired. That is, the proposed legislation would allow these federally regulated employers to convert their secure defined benefit (DB) pension plans into less secure target benefit (TB) or shared-risk plans. Under the proposed TB plans, pension benefits would depend on the plans' financial performance.

This is because the conversion to Target Benefit Plan would shift the bulk of the financial risks from the federally regulated employers to the plan members, including pensioners, and allow the employers to walk away from promises made to them. In effect, such change would allow these employers to renege on promises and commitments made to their retired plan members who honoured their part of the commitment, and despite their years of dedicated service. Such change is unfair to retirees.

This type of pension conversion was introduced in New Brunswick in 2013 for public sector employees and extended to retirees.

Gary Oberg, President of NAFR said: "Legislation is needed to prevent this from happening to any pensioner- whether in the public or private sector. Employers must honour existing pension commitments to pensioners"

In this federal election, NAFR, along with partner organizations , representing some 6 million employees and retirees across Canada, will ask political parties to live up to the commitments made to pensioners and veterans.

At the local level, the Ottawa Branch will also undertake certain advocacy activities to ensure the protection of pension benefits to federal retirees such as:

- Attending all-candidates debates, in selected ridings;
- Writing to MPs/candidates of all political parties in all ridings;
- Writing to local community newspapers;
- Meeting with local federal MPs/candidates in selected ridings;
- Organizing discussions with local partners/organizations.

The Ottawa Branch produced a fact sheet on pension issues. This fact sheet is now on the Ottawa Branch website for the information of members www.fsnottawa.com

The voice of our members is important and can make a difference.

So in this federal election, we encourage you to take action and speak up to protect pensioners.

Here are some messages and ways to express your concerns and issues:

Key messages to be communicated:

- *“Employers should not be allowed to change the terms of compensation promised to people once they have retired”*
- *“A pension is a promise and a commitment.”*
- *“Employees provide their service and the employer compensate them. That compensation includes pensions. Pensioners trust their employer to keep their side of the agreement- to honour their promise.”*
- *“94% of Canadians believe that employers should live up to their commitments they have made to pensioners and employees(Ipsos Reid 2014)”*
- *“Many retirees do not have the option to earn other income.”*

Questions to ask:

Seniors in Canada should live with dignity and income security.

- *What is included in the electoral program to protect pensions?*
- *Are you committed to honour the promise made to pensioners and veterans?*
- *Do you agree that no employer should be allowed to change the compensation promised to former employees once they have retired?*
- *Would you support legislation to protect pension benefits for retirees to ensure that no employer can renege on their pension commitments to retirees or claw back benefits after a person has retired?*

Ways to communicate our messages:

- *Talk and/or write to your local member of Parliament and to candidates of political parties*
- *Attend and ask questions at all candidates' debates. These debates are great forums for putting our issues before our communities*
- *Be ready to ask questions to political candidates campaigning door-to door and by telephone*
- *Call-in to talk show to pass on our messages*

While the Ottawa Branch will advocate to protect the pensions of our members, you, our members also have a voice. So you need to speak up.



Justin P.J. Trudeau

Leader of the Liberal Party of Canada
Chef du Parti libéral du Canada

July 23, 2015

Gary Oberg, President
National Association of Federal Retirees
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Dear Mr. Oberg,

I am writing to thank you again for taking the time to meet with me on April 1, 2015.

With the House of Commons adjourned for the summer it appears that the Conservative government will not be proceeding with its Target Benefit Plan (TBP) Framework prior to this fall's federal election.

As we head into Election 2015, I would like to reiterate my position on TBPs. I continue to believe that while they may make sense in certain circumstances, any changes to existing Defined Benefit Pensions (DBP) should be made on a going-forward basis. DBPs, which have already paid for by employees and pensioners, should not retroactively be changed into TBPs.

Sincerely,

Justin P.J. Trudeau
Member of Parliament for Papineau
Leader of the Liberal Part of Canada

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