

November 12, 2015

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The Right Honourable Justin Trudeau, P.C., M.P.
Langeving Block
80 Wellington St.
Ottawa, ON K1A 0A2

Dear Prime Minister:

I am writing you as the former and first Chair of the National Seniors Council. I served in that capacity for the maximum two three-years terms from 2007 to 2013, and was appointed to that position because of my background and experience in seniors' issues. I am still very much involved, on a volunteer basis, with seniors' groups and issues.

Firstly, congratulations on your successful election campaign and on becoming our Prime Minister. I have followed closely the election campaign, especially on issues that are important to older Canadians, such as health care, pensions, and income security. The concern that I have is that, in the appointment of your Cabinet, I did not note any Minister with the specific responsibility for seniors' issues. You have personally taken on the responsibility for youth, and there is a Minister whose responsibilities include children and families. However, I did not see any Minister that was assigned responsibilities for seniors. This may very well be rectified when the specific mandates are provided to each Minister.

You will agree that older Canadians are a very important part of Canada's society. With an aging population, Canada must continue to be leaders in ensuring that all Canadians age with dignity and in security. Older Canadians have contributed to making Canada what it is now and continue to contribute very positively to our society.

In the previous government, there was a Minister responsible for seniors, the Secretary of State, Seniors. I fully understand, and personally support, your decision to have a smaller Cabinet. However, this must not be at the cost of placing seniors' issues as a secondary concern for your government. I think that it would be very appropriate that you assure all Canadians that seniors' issues are very much part of your government's priorities.

A few years ago, I was a keynote speaker at a conference in Regina. The other keynote speaker was your colleague, the Honourable Ralph Goodale. He gave a very good presentation on the pillars of income security for older Canadians, which reflected, I think, the Liberal Party's approach in dealing with an aging society. I happen to support that approach.

I wish you well in dealing with the enormous amount of priorities that you face as Prime Minister. Issues dealing with an aging population must be one of the priorities. I am of course at your service should you or one of your officials would like to discuss this matter with me.

Sincerely,

Jean-Guy Soulière

