



Rachel Blaney

Member of Parliament
North Island-Powell River

The Honourable Lawrence MacAulay
Minister of Veterans Affairs
Via Email

Campbell River BC
July 8, 2020

RE: Veterans Accessing CERB as Gap-Funding

Dear Minister,

It has been brought to my attention that there are a number of veterans accessing the Canada Emergency Response Benefit (CERB) when they are not legally eligible to do so. They have made the decision to apply for the CERB despite their ineligibility because of the lengthy delays within Veterans Affairs Canada (VAC) due to the extreme backlog in disability benefit applications.

From what I have been told, their plan is to use the money from the CERB to support themselves right now, and hopefully by the time they have to repay the CERB, VAC will have processed their disability claims and thus they will have the money to pay back the CERB.

These actions are probably also due to the fact that a number of Ministers and other government MPs initially told Canadians to apply for the CERB, even if they didn't meet the eligibility criteria. The government later tried to criminalize those who applied without being eligible, though fortunately this has not gone through as of yet.

I think we can both agree that we do not want to see veterans criminalized or punished by the government simply for accessing government money from one source when the source they are legally entitled to is simply moving too slowly to meet their needs.

Because of this situation, I hope you will agree with me in saying that criminalizing ineligible CERB applicants is completely inappropriate. Canada's injured service women and men have every right to receive support after their sacrifices, and they are now doing what they can to work within a broken system.

As always, I remain available to discuss this and other matters relating to Canada's veterans at your convenience.

Sincerely,



Rachel Blaney, Member of Parliament
North Island-Powell River

cc.

The Honourable Bill Morneau
Minister of Finance

The Honourable Carla Qualtrough
Minister of Employment, Workforce Development and Disability Inclusion

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