

LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION



CHEF DE L'OPPOSITION

October 20, 2010

Dr. Ruby Dhalla, M.P.
Room 218 West Block
House of Commons
Ottawa, Ontario
K1A 0A6

Dear Ruby,

I am writing to confirm that neither the Liberal Party of Canada, nor I as Leader, can support your private member's bill, Bill C-428, *An Act to amend the Old Age Security Act (residency requirement)*.

If passed, your bill would amend the *Old Age Security Act* to lower from ten years to three years the residency requirement for entitlement to a monthly Old Age Security (OAS) pension. The implementation of such legislation would be prohibitively expensive and would only provide assistance to a very small number of Canadians. The vast majority of Canadians who are struggling to make ends meet in their retirement would see no benefit from this legislation. Your bill is specifically targeted at providing increased assistance to new Canadians. While that is an admirable goal, making changes to the OAS system is not the appropriate method through which to improve such assistance particularly as there are a number of support systems and legal requirements already available to assist new Canadians.

In difficult economic times such as these, the Liberal Party must ensure that any commitment we make to spend public dollars is not only efficient and effective but also that our efforts unite Canadians. For these reasons outlined above, I regret to inform you that we cannot support Bill C-428.

I do wish to commend you for your efforts to address the important issues of pension adequacy, coverage and security. Your passion and commitment to these issues cannot be questioned and your advocacy on behalf of your constituents is a credit to our Party.

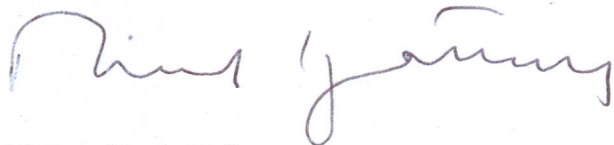
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As you know, the Liberal Party places a great importance on the issue of retirement security and we have already committed to a number of fiscally responsible measures that we believe will help Canadians retire with dignity. Our commitments include:

- A Supplementary Canada Pension Plan which would allow Canadians to voluntarily invest extra funds in our trusted national pension;
- Giving employees with stranded pensions following bankruptcy the option of growing their pension assets through the Canada Pension Plan; and
- Protecting vulnerable Canadians on long-term disability by giving them preferred status as creditors in case of bankruptcy.

I look forward to working with you in the coming weeks and months as we put forward an alternative vision to Canadians that is both compassionate and fiscally responsible.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Michael Ignatieff". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Michael" and the last name "Ignatieff" clearly distinguishable.

Michael Ignatieff