



The Honourable Kamal Khera
Minister of Seniors
House of Commons
Kamal.Khera@parl.gc.ca

8 February 2022

Re: Emergency payment needed to support seniors who lost GIS due to CERB

Dear Honourable Minister,

We applaud your government's important decision to exclude the Canada Emergency Response Benefit (CERB) and the Canada Recovery Benefit (CRB) as income sources that would lower payments under the Guaranteed Income Supplement (GIS) for low-income seniors.

Our understanding is that sufficient funds have been set aside to reimburse GIS recipients in May 2022 for the income they lost as a result of the earlier policy to claw back pandemic benefits. The Parliamentary Budget Office (PBO) reported that typical losses to the 80,000+ recipients affected would be in the \$5,000 range for each recipient.

The reason we are writing to you today is that for many low-income seniors in Grey County and Bruce County, May 2022 is far too late a date for the expected reimbursement.

Seniors are on the verge of eviction, and they need help now. Those who live in rent geared to income housing have seen rental charges increase by 30% of the pandemic benefits received, in addition to the GIS claw back.

In many cases, landlords can't and won't wait until May. Extreme hardship would be faced by seniors during the current housing crisis and cold winter unless action is taken immediately.

We encourage the government to undertake the following measures immediately:

1. Immediately implement a \$100 million housing fund for pandemic claw back victims using a very low barrier distribution method to help keep seniors housed and mitigate evictions; and
2. Immediately provide an interim down payment of \$2,500 to all GIS claw back victims with losses of at least this amount.

With these direct measures, you can assure the success of your government's decision to end the claw back.

We urge you to act now!

Yours Sincerely,

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