



HOUSE OF COMMONS
CHAMBRE DES COMMUNES
CANADA

April 19, 2021

The Honourable Diane Lebouthillier
Minister of National Revenue

Ottawa, Ontario
Canada
K1A 0A6

Subject: Canada Emergency Response Benefit (CERB) repayment

Dear Minister Lebouthillier:

We are writing to you because we are deeply concerned about the disastrous consequences of the Canada Emergency Response Benefit (CERB) repayment for low-income people.

We have been contacted by 19 human rights organizations in Quebec, your province. They have told us about the difficulties that low-income people face in meeting the federal government's and the CRA's CERB repayment requirements.

The CRA admitted that there were errors and unclear information provided on the eligibility criteria. Furthermore, the CRA had applicants' full information but did not take this into account before granting the CERB to ineligible individuals. There have also been situations where Canadians switched from the CERB to EI but there was no system in place to ensure that EI took the CERB into account.

This problem goes beyond Quebec. Similar stories from Canadians in our riding of Fredericton and in British Columbia show that this is a Canada-wide problem. We are writing to you today to show respect for these Canadians by implementing the following measures:

- that there be no deadline for repayments;
- that half of the GST tax credit be used for repayments;
- that no further amounts be claimed;
- that there be no interest.

These groups' requests are very reasonable. We think we need to go even further: we should not ask this group of people to repay the CERB. This situation also highlights the need to implement a guaranteed liveable income to ensure that Canadians do not fall back into poverty. The most recent report from the Parliamentary Budget Officer's office shows that introducing a guaranteed liveable income would lift 49% of Canadians out of poverty.

Despite the vaccine rollout, we're currently seeing with the COVID-19 variants that the crisis is not over. We are therefore calling on you to remove the CERB repayments from your department's list of priorities. There are other emergencies to deal with.

We're available should you wish to discuss the matter.

Sincerely,



Paul Manly
MP Nanaimo-
Ladysmith



Jenica Atwin
MP Fredericton



Elizabeth May
MP Saanich-Gulf
Islands