

Some tips for writing to your MP

You are writing to your MP because a personal note is far more effective than any other communication. Your words have power. Use them well.

We know that some folks find it a bit difficult to write a letter, or how to get one started, so we are pleased to provide our thoughts. We hope they are helpful.

Getting ready to write

Spend a few minutes thinking about what you want to say, and jot down a few notes. These reminders are important because you don't want to finish your letter and then realize you forgot to say something.

Use your own words. It may be tempting to use quotations but this letter is about you and your problem. Your MP will be more receptive to a personal note.

Don't bury the headline

The very first item in your letter should be a very clear statement of your purpose. Let your MP know immediately why you are writing.

Keep things cordial

Let other people with other issues get grumpy and make threats or "yell" at their Member of Parliament. Your MP would much rather help someone who is courteous.

Make it personal

If you are a retiree, explain the impact the legislation will have if your spouse should be left without a pension. Are you worrying constantly? Let your MP know.

If you are a surviving spouse who has denied a pension, be very clear about what the legislation has done to you. For example, if you had to sell your home to survive, make sure your MP knows. If you are having to use a food bank, say so. Et cetera.

Solicit answers and opinions

Don't allow your Member of Parliament to read your letter and file it away. Ask one or two questions that require your MP to take a position and provide an answer. Examples:

- What does your MP think of the legislation?
- Does your MP agree with it. If so, why?
- If your MP disagrees with the legislation, what will he or she commit to do about it?
- Does he or she think it's fair that you should be in this awful position?
- Does your MP know that he or she is also affected by it?

- If your MP is not NDP, advise them that this party has a Private Member's Bill to address the issue of pensions for surviving spouses. Ask if they will support it.
- If your MP is a Liberal, ask why this legislation continues to exist with a government who says they are committed to reducing poverty among seniors.
- If your MP is not a Liberal, ask how they feel about a policy that increases poverty among seniors.
- Et cetera.

Make yourself available

Make sure your MP knows how to reach you by email, letter, or phone in case they want to follow up.

Express your appreciation

MPs are busy people and there are many people trying to get their attention. Be sure to say "thank you" for your MP's attention.

Involve your local media

Media coverage is always helpful. Send a copy of your letter to your local paper. With the issue in enough local papers, it should have a good chance of being picked up by the national papers as well as radio and television.

Special Note

If you are uncertain who to tell your story to, besides your own MP, send a copy of your letter to us at contact@pensionfairness-sspfc.ca and we will make sure it is sent to all the right MPs in the opposition parties.

Also, we would like to track the success of this mail campaign and, if you don't mind, we'd appreciate receiving a copy of your letter. You can send a copy to the same email address contact@pensionfairness-sspfc.ca