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VETERANS REVIEW AND APPEAL BOARD SHOULD BE ELIMINATED: NDP
Veterans Ombudsman's report shows board is failing veterans

OTTAWA – Official Opposition Veterans Affairs Critic Peter Stoffer (Sackville-Eastern Shore) and Deputy Critic Sylvain Chicoine (Châteauguay-Saint-Constant) renewed their call today for the elimination of the Veterans Review and Appeal Board (VRAB) in response to yesterday's report by Veterans Ombudsman Guy Parent.

"I congratulate the Veterans Ombudsman for his very thorough report," said Stoffer. "He made it very clear, like Veterans Ombudsman Pat Stogran before him, that VRAB has been failing to give veterans the benefit of the doubt, not disclosing medical information used in its rulings, and are vague in their explanations to military and RCMP veterans. It is time for the federal government to eliminate the Veterans Review and Appeal Board."

"The Ombudsman's report is clearly saying that VRAB is failing military and RCMP veterans," said Chicoine. "This Conservative government has taken no action on reforming the Veterans Review and Appeal Board as they promised to do."

Stoffer noted that veterans and their families have been dissatisfied with VRAB for many years. It angers them to know that the members of VRAB are often appointed because of their political connections and have little military or medical experience.

"We want VAC to re-assume the responsibility for re-examining a veterans' application for a disability pension," said Stoffer. "Front-line staff would decide on the merit of an application using peer-reviewed medical evidence, including reports from doctors and specialists."

"We call on this government to do the right thing and eliminate the Veterans Review and Appeal Board."

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