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Armed Forces Pensioners'/Annuitants' Association of Canada | Association canadienne des pensionnés et rentiers militaires

Government position on wounded soldiers inhumane

(Renfrew, Ontario): The Armed Forces Pensioners'/Annuitants' Association of Canada (AFP/AAC) is joining veterans groups across the country in unequivocal protest of the Conservative government position on caring for wounded soldiers in the New Veterans Charter and in court.

In 1917, then-Prime Minister Robert Borden publically stated it was the government's duty to care for the wounded, including making a promise to soldiers heading into battle "that you need not fear that the government and the country will fail to show just appreciation of your service to the country and Empire in what you are about to do and what you have already done."

This position has been upheld in forming government policy around treatment of soldiers— until now. Because it is not part of the Constitution, government lawyers have seized it as an ugly opportunity to exploit the men and women who have been wounded in service.

This recent revelation that the government is exploiting our judicial system as a strategy to renege on its pledge to veterans made nearly a century ago, simply demonstrates its moral bankruptcy.

AFP/AAC believes that all veterans, regardless of when or where they put life and limb at risk in the service of Canada, must be treated equally and accorded equal benefits. The sacrifices made by disabled veterans can no longer be ignored, nor can they be treated with discriminatory care: to continue do so is an insult.

The Veterans Ombudsman along with several expert panels and advisory groups all have identified the modifications that must be applied to the New Veterans Charter to make it right. The time has come for Veterans Affairs Minister Julian Fantino to get on with fixing the problem rather than trying to make it go away or slowing change taking the judicial route. There is ample evidence that the current discriminatory legislation is creating second-class veterans of many of our wounded warriors and this has to stop.

We encourage all Canadians to make their voices heard and let their elected officials know that we will not stand for this inhumane treatment of our veterans.

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For more information, please contact Bonnie James, executive director, AFP/AAC, at (613) 432-9491 or executivedirector@afpaac.ca