

House of Commons

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Charlie Angus

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The Honourable Ahmed Hussen
Minister of Families, Children and Social Development
140 Promenade du Portage
Gatineau, Quebec K1A 0J9

September 25, 2020

Dear Minister Hussen,

I am writing to draw your attention to the continuing issue of homelessness in the City of Timmins. As I am sure you are aware, COVID-19 and the Opioid epidemic have caused severe strain resources of municipalities across the country; at the same time, they are finding it challenging to address the issue of homelessness and addiction. The City of Timmins is no different in struggling to find the funds to ensure that this population is not left out in the cold in the coming months.

In the Cochrane District, which Timmins is part of, a Designated Community was made as part of the Reaching Home Program. This recognition was an important step in helping them to serve what has become an overwhelming homelessness problem and provided much-needed help at the time. However, the pandemic has presented a whole other level of issues. The City failed to receive any of the COVID-19 Reaching Home Program, right when they truly needed it, as most of the funds were directed to the large urban centres.

The government needs to recognize that the issue of homelessness is not merely a big city problem. We have upwards of a thousand people who are at risk from a lack of safe housing. COVID has only added to the pressures on front line agencies already overburdened with the opioid and homeless crisis.

I was pleased to see Monday's announcement of the Rapid Housing Initiative and the issue being furthered supported in the Speech from the Throne. These programs cannot happen soon enough for Timmins and cities in similar circumstances. Homelessness, COVID-19 and opioids are taking their toll on our communities.

As mentioned in Tuesday's Speech from the Throne, *no one should be without a place to stay during a pandemic, or for that matter, a Canadian winter*. However, without help, and soon, that is precisely what is about to happen to Timmins' homeless population.

I look forward to your reply on how we can work together to ensure that this crisis is not compounded and made worse as we enter the second wave of this pandemic.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "C Angus". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned above a horizontal line that serves as a baseline for the typed name below.

Charlie Angus, Member of Parliament
Timmins-James Bay

cc. Mayor George Pirie, City of Timmins