

14 September 2007

File: 29-1

The Right Honourable Stephen Harper, P.C., B.A., M.A.
Prime Minister of Canada
House of Commons
Ottawa, ON K1A 0A6

Dear Prime Minister:

I write to you as a last resort to resolve an urgent situation. During the election campaign of 2004 your party went on record promising that the limitations of the VIP program as implemented by the previous government, concerning surviving spouses of deceased veterans, would be corrected and that all such spouses would receive VIP support. Under previous legislation only those spouses of veterans who passed away after 1 January 1981, and who were receiving VIP, are eligible to continue to receive VIP funding support. There is no consideration for pre-1981 spouses. As of this date your government has not yet amended the legislation to correct this unfair and prejudicial policy.

In like manner, many veterans, more than 70 each day, pass away without the VIP income support which would have allowed them to remain in their homes in their final days. Sick, frail and debilitated by age, these veterans have been forced to leave their homes as they no longer have the strength to maintain basic maintenance chores nor the resources to hire attending assistance. Separated from their caring spouses they are often relegated to nursing homes without any financial support. The bureaucratic response of Veterans Affairs to this situation refers to new studies and reviews concerning the issue of "frailty", but once again, another 70 die each passing day without the promised support.

Mr. Prime Minister will you please direct Veterans Affairs Canada to resolve these urgent issues of need as a priority. We appreciate that there will be a cost. But, only for a short time. In only a few years the last frail war veteran will have passed on and we will be left only with memories of their courage and sacrifice. We trust that these lasting memories will not be clouded by images of government inaction and bureaucratic indifference to their plea for help in their final days.

Sincerely,

Jack Frost
Dominion President