

From:
A recipient of the OW or ODSP program

To:
Hon. Todd Smith
Minister of Children, Community and Social Services
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Copy:
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Ontario, August 2019

Re: changes to social assistance

Our last year under Minister Lisa MacLeod's direction of the Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services has been extremely stressful and we very much look forward to your hand on our file, particularly to your promise to listen to those concerned.

We live at the heart of our very precarious Ontario social assistance system and as such we hold the embodied wisdom of what a better future with less poverty can look like. We are the human beings through whom your next income security plan will be expressed. And so, please remember that it is counter-productive to design it without us.

Here is our short message:

1. We strongly oppose any changes to the definition of disability that could exclude any earner living with a disability from ODSP, unless: 1) The OW allowance rates are jointly raised to at least the current level of the ODSP rates, and 2) current ODSP recipients are grand-fathered with the current medical reviews' regulations.
2. We strongly oppose the increase of clawbacks on earnings from 50 to 75% above exemptions for both OW and ODSP.
3. We request that you set up a process that recognizes the rights of persons with lived experience of poverty and/or disability to co-decide what concerns them directly. This process should allow us to exercise our ICESCR (International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights) and CRPD (Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disability) rights and to shape the social assistance programs that affect the intimate core of our lives. We do not need to wake up every morning afraid of loosing housing, the ability to work and the meager income security we sometimes are able to master together.

We urge you to hear us.

Sincerely,

Recipient of OW or ODSP