

April 22, 2011

Hélian Lizotte  
National President  
National Association of Federal Retirees

Dear Mr. Lizotte:

Thank you for your letter of April 6, 2011 outlining the concerns of retirees from the federal public service. New Democrats strongly value the contribution Canada's public servants have made to this country. Without a cadre of professional public servants Canada's government would not be able to carry out the valuable programs and services it provides.

In your letter you lay out 3 key issues:

- Protection of federal public sector retiree pensions (superannuation plans) including indexation;
- Maintenance and enhancement of the existing program benefits and cost sharing provisions of the Public Service Health Care Plan (PSHCP);
- Maintenance of the existing program benefits and cost sharing provisions of the Pensioners' Dental Services Plan (PDSP).

New Democrats see pensions as deferred wages and as such will constantly work to prevent any erosion of pension benefits. In our platform we lay out practical steps to strengthen pensions and retirement security.

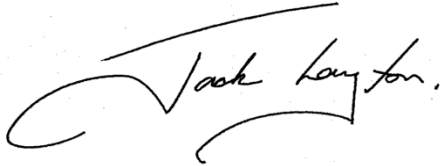
We are very aware that in a context where many are poorly served by pension plans, many point to public service pensions with envy. We understand the importance of defending public service pensions as models for the rest of the country, not privileged exceptions. Be assured that the NDP will continue to work to strengthen public pensions, particularly based on the defined benefit model, as opposed to the defined contribution model preferred by private sector proponents.

We will also work with the provinces to bring about increases in the Canada/Quebec Pension Plan benefit, with the eventual goal to double benefits. We will work with the provinces to build-in the flexibility for Canadians and their employers to make voluntary contributions over and above the mandatory contributions to individual public pension accounts. We will amend federal bankruptcy legislation to move pensioners and long-term disability recipients to the front of the line of creditors when their employers enter court protection or declare bankruptcy. We will increase the annual Guaranteed Income Supplement to a sufficient level in the first budget to lift every senior in Canada out of poverty immediately.

While these proposals do not directly address the issues you raise they do show the underlying philosophy to New Democrats' approach to addressing pensions and other retirement benefits.

Thank you for your interest in the policies of the New Democratic Party of Canada.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jack Layton". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "J" and "L".

Jack Layton,  
Leader, Canada's New Democrats