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Mr. George Beaulieu
Dominion President
Army, Navy and Air Force Veterans in Canada
6 Beechwood Avenue, Suite 2
Ottawa, Ontario K1L 8B4

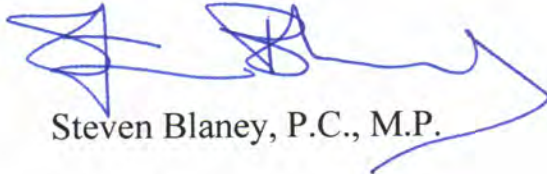
Dear Mr. Beaulieu,

I am pleased to enclose my responses to the Army, Navy and Air Force Veterans in Canada (ANAVETS) resolutions adopted at your 51st Biennial Dominion Convention held in Winnipeg, Manitoba, from September 23-26, 2012.

These resolutions are an excellent indication of the priorities of your membership, and I value those views. I look forward to working with you on these and other issues.

Should you require additional information or have comments on any of the resolutions, please contact me.

Sincerely,



Steven Blaney, P.C., M.P.

Enclosure



**2012 DOMINION CONVENTION
RESOLUTION 4
IMPLEMENT NEW VETERANS CHARTER REPORT
ADVOCACY**

WHEREAS at the time of the enactment of the New Veterans Charter in 2005, the Minister of Veterans Affairs, on behalf of the Federal Government, made a formal commitment to the veterans' community that the Charter was a "living document" and upon identification of gaps and voids in the Charter, legislative amendments would be enacted to address these concerns; and

WHEREAS the New Veterans Charter Advisory Group, made up of veterans' stakeholders, leading academics, and experts, studied the Charter for three years resulting in a comprehensive Report entitled "Living Charter In Action" dated June 2009, which identified specific deficiencies in the Charter and made a number of recommendations to improve the legislation; and

WHEREAS the New Veterans Charter Advisory Group Report was endorsed and complemented by the Standing Committee on Veterans Affairs through their Report entitled "A Timely Tune-Up for the Living New Veterans Charter" dated June 2010.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the VAC Stakeholders Committee (which includes ANAVETS) unanimously approves the position that the Federal Government be required to fully implement the recommendations of the New Veterans Charter Advisory Group as endorsed and complemented by the Standing Committee on Veterans Affairs in order to fulfill its commitment to Canada's veterans and their dependants.

Response to Resolution 4

The recommendations received from Veterans Affairs Canada's (VAC's) former advisory committees over the years have greatly assisted the Department in identifying the key priorities for additional support to meet the needs of Veterans,

particularly those who are seriously injured. Among these three committees, VAC has received over 250 individual recommendations and the majority of them have been fully or partially implemented.

Recommendations of these committees have been addressed, in part, through the increased financial support through the 2011 *Enhanced New Veterans Charter Act (Bill C-55)*. This included an increase in the monthly financial support available through the Earnings Loss Benefit, improved access to the Permanent Impairment Allowance (PIA), the introduction of a \$1,000 monthly (PIA) supplement for the most seriously injured Canadian Armed Forces Veterans and, payment options for Veterans receiving a disability award.

Other examples of how the recommendations of these committees have been addressed include: the extension of the Veterans Independence Program housekeeping and grounds maintenance to disabled and low-income primary care givers of war Veterans; strengthened case management services through the Legacy of Care initiative and, the Veterans Transition Action Plan announced in October 2012 to help men and women in uniform make a successful transition to civilian life.

As part of ongoing operations, we continue to explore improvements to the New Veterans Charter (NVC) to better support the most seriously disabled Veterans and their families. Some of the past recommendations are not being considered for implementation as they do not align with the principles of modern disability management or the wellness model on which the NVC was based, or are outside the mandate of the Department.

The Government of Canada is working to provide our Veterans and their families with the support they need, and is committed to continuing to work with stakeholders to identify priorities.

**2012 DOMINION CONVENTION
RESOLUTION 5
IMPLEMENT THE GERONTOLOGICAL
ADVISORY COUNCIL REPORT
ADVOCACY**

WHEREAS for many years it has been readily apparent that the VAC Health Care/Long Term Care regulations contain many inequities, anomalies and complexities in their application to Canadian veterans and their dependants; and

WHEREAS in recognition of this state of affairs, VAC on numerous occasions has established as a formal commitment to the veterans' community that health care reform would be pursued as a high priority in the overall legislative agenda of the Department; and

WHEREAS the Gerontological Advisory Council was formed by VAC in 1997 made up of veteran stakeholders, leading academics and practitioners in the field of gerontology and health care to provide counsel and advice to the Department; and

WHEREAS the principle mandate of the Gerontological Advisory Council was to focus on the health care/long term care needs of Canada's aging Traditional veterans, it was implicit that the council's ultimate recommendations would also impact on Modern-Day veterans over their life course; and

WHEREAS the GAC issued a seminal Report in 2006 entitled "Keeping the Promise" which provided a comprehensive analysis of the deficiencies and inequities in the VAC Health Care/Long Term Care program and set out detailed recommendations to resolve these concerns; and

WHEREAS The Standing Committee on Veterans Affairs in its Report of May 2008, endorsed the recommendations of the GAC by specifically proposing that the Department should establish a re-designed Veterans' Health Care Program in accordance with the GAC Report; and

WHEREAS notwithstanding the fact that various Ministers of Veterans Affairs have provided assurances and commitments that the Government would respond to the GAC Report, no meaningful Government action or implementation has occurred to further the cause of health care reform.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the VAC Stakeholders Committee (which includes ANAVETS) unanimously adopts the position that VAC be required to fully implement the recommendations in the Gerontological Advisory Council Report in order to fulfill its commitment to the veterans' community for substantial health care reform and to satisfy the "social covenant" that exists between Canadian veterans, their dependants, and the people of Canada.

Response to Resolution 5

The recommendations received from Veterans Affairs Canada's (VAC's) former advisory committees over the years have greatly assisted the Department in identifying the key priorities for additional support to meet the needs of Veterans, particularly those who are seriously injured. Among these three committees, VAC has received over 250 individual recommendations and the majority of them have been fully or partially implemented.

Recommendations of these committees have been addressed, in part, through the increased financial support through the 2011 *Enhanced New Veterans Charter Act (Bill C-55)*. This included an increase in the monthly financial support available through the Earnings Loss Benefit, improved access to the Permanent Impairment Allowance (PIA), the introduction of a \$1,000 monthly (PIA) supplement for the most seriously injured Canadian Armed Forces Veterans and, payment options for Veterans receiving a disability award.

Other examples of how the recommendations of these committees have been addressed include: the extension of the Veterans Independence Program housekeeping and grounds maintenance to disabled and low-income primary care givers of war Veterans; strengthened case management services through the Legacy of Care initiative and, the Veterans Transition Action Plan announced in October 2012 to help men and women in uniform make a successful transition to civilian life.

As part of ongoing operations, we continue to explore improvements to the New Veterans Charter (NVC) to better support the most seriously disabled Veterans and their families. Some of the past recommendations are not being considered for implementation as they do not align with the principles of modern disability management or the wellness model on which the NVC was based, or are outside the mandate of the Department.

The Government of Canada is working to provide our Veterans and their families with the support they need, and is committed to continuing to work with stakeholders to identify priorities.

**2012 DOMINION CONVENTION
RESOLUTION 6
IMPLEMENT THE SPECIAL NEEDS
ADVISORY GROUP REPORT
ADVOCACY**

WHEREAS it is widely accepted that the needs of Canada's most seriously disabled veterans are a priority to VAC and the veteran's community; and

WHEREAS the Special Needs Advisory Group (SNAG) was established by VAC in 2005 to provide counsel and advise on the special requirements of seriously disabled veterans with particular emphasis on the application of the New Veterans Charter; and

WHEREAS SNAG produced five volumes of Reports during the course of its mandate delineating in full the most significant areas impacting on seriously disabled veterans in Canada and providing recommendations to fill gaps and voids identified in veterans' legislation in this context; and

WHEREAS the SNAG Reports were acknowledged as a valuable contribution by the House of Commons Canada Report of the Standing Committee on Veterans Affairs entitled "A Timely Tune-Up for the Living New Veterans Charter" dated June 2010; and

WHEREAS at the time of the enactment of the New Veterans Charter in 2005, the Minister of Veterans Affairs, on behalf of the Federal Government, made a formal commitment to the veterans' community that the Charter was a "living document" and upon identification of gaps and voids in the Charter, legislative amendments would be enacted to address these concerns.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the VAC Stakeholders Committee (which includes ANAVETS) unanimously adopts the position that the recommendations of the Special Needs Advisory Group Report be incorporated into the Federal

Government's full implementation of the New Veterans Charter Advisory Group Report in order to fulfill its commitment to Canada's seriously disabled veterans and their dependants.

Response to Resolution 6

The recommendations received from Veterans Affairs Canada's (VAC's) former advisory committees over the years have greatly assisted the Department in identifying the key priorities for additional support to meet the needs of Veterans, particularly those who are seriously injured. Among these three committees, VAC has received over 250 individual recommendations and the majority of them have been fully or partially implemented.

Recommendations of these committees have been addressed, in part, through the increased financial support through the 2011 *Enhanced New Veterans Charter Act (Bill C-55)*. This included an increase in the monthly financial support available through the Earnings Loss Benefit, improved access to the Permanent Impairment Allowance (PIA), the introduction of a \$1,000 monthly (PIA) supplement for the most seriously injured Canadian Armed Forces Veterans and, payment options for Veterans receiving a disability award.

Other examples of how the recommendations of these committees have been addressed include: the extension of the Veterans Independence Program housekeeping and grounds maintenance to disabled and low-income primary care givers of war Veterans; strengthened case management services through the Legacy of Care initiative and, the Veterans Transition Action Plan announced in October 2012 to help men and women in uniform make a successful transition to civilian life.

As part of ongoing operations, we continue to explore improvements to the New Veterans Charter (NVC) to better support the most seriously disabled Veterans and their families. Some of the past recommendations are not being considered for implementation as they do not align with the principles of modern disability management or the wellness model on which the NVC was based, or are outside the mandate of the Department.

The Government of Canada is working to provide our Veterans and their families with the support they need, and is committed to continuing to work with stakeholders to identify priorities.

**2012 DOMINION CONVENTION
RESOLUTION 7
ALBERTA UNIT 2
ADVOCACY - VIP FOR RCMP**

WHEREAS recent changes to eligibility for the Veterans Independence Program (VIP) now allow Canadian Forces (CF) members to qualify while still serving or after release when qualified as a result of their entitled condition; and

WHEREAS The Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) are eligible for disability pension payments while still serving or after release, with funding allocated from the Solicitor General's fiscal envelope.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that VIP be made available to members of the RCMP on the same basis as for members of the Canadian Forces with required funding allocated from the Solicitor General's fiscal envelope, with full support of the RCMP Commissioner.

Response to Resolution 7

Veterans Affairs Canada (VAC) does not have legislative authority for the RCMP.

It remains the responsibility of the RCMP to determine whether or not it will continue to explore the issue of extending the Veterans Independence Program to its members.

**2012 DOMINION CONVENTION
RESOLUTION 8
WOODSTOCK UNIT 95
ADVOCACY – VETERAN ON VRAB HEARINGS**

WHEREAS at the present time, the Veterans Review Panel and Appeal Board (VRAB) reviews veterans' pension claims; and

WHEREAS veterans must appeal to this Board for redress; and

WHEREAS this Board, at the present time, is not mandated to have a veteran serving on it.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Army, Navy and Air Force Veterans in Canada petition the government to ensure that a veteran is a part of the Board in all VRAB hearings; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the government and Veterans Affairs Canada be lobbied vigorously on this issue.

Response to Resolution 8

Veterans and Veterans' organizations have asked for more members with military, medical, and Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) experience to be appointed to the Veterans Review and Appeal Board. In response, and in recognition of the value of having members with military experience on the Board, the Minister of Veterans Affairs made a commitment to increase the number of Board members with these backgrounds.

In October 2012, the Minister announced the appointment of four new Board members with Canadian Armed Forces (CAF) or medical experience. The two Board members appointed in 2011 were a CAF and an RCMP Veteran. With these appointments, the Board now has among the highest amount of members with military, medical, and police experience in its history.

All of the Board's members were appointed through a transparent and merit-based selection process that ensures they have the skills and abilities to hear and decide Veterans' appeals. The Board's membership needs will continue to be filled through the appointment of qualified candidates. All Board members receive ongoing professional development to support them in making fair and well-reasoned decisions for Veterans and their families.

This professional development has always provided members with ongoing and specialized training from medical, legal, military and civilian experts. It also provides them with regular exposure to military and policing work/cultures through a variety of training activities, including visits to CAF bases. Following the review of the Board's activities by the House of Commons Standing Committee on Veterans Affairs, the Board has committed to renewing its military/policing cultural awareness training and is working to involve the CAF and RCMP more directly in it.

**2012 DOMINION CONVENTION
RESOLUTION 9
DOMINION COMMAND
ADVOCACY – TREATMENT OF RESERVES**

WHEREAS reserve personnel, whether on Class A, B, or C call-out, do everything that a full time military person does, including training, combat operations, etc. while employed; and

WHEREAS the various classes of call-out only have to do with the duration of the call out, and what pot the money comes from; and

WHEREAS when full-time military personnel get injured while doing their duty and are not able to work they receive a minimum of \$40,000 per year compensation while a reservist who gets injured the very same way, will only get a minimum of \$24,000 a year; and

WHEREAS reserve personnel have all of the obligations of military personnel in their life including raising a family, having a place to live etc.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that Veterans Affairs Canada, be asked to stop this discriminatory practice and provide the exact same compensation to all personnel (Regular and Reserve) that were injured while on duty for their country.

Response to Resolution 9

As announced by our Government last December, Reservists who are injured as a result of service have access to the same programs and services under the New Veterans Charter as members of the Regular Force.

The *Enhanced New Veterans Charter Act*, which came into effect on October 3, 2011, increased the monthly salary used to calculate the Earnings Loss Benefit (ELB) payable to part-time Reservists (Class A and Class B less than 180 days) to \$2,700. The provisions of the Act also increased the minimum base salary used to calculate the ELB for both Regular Force and full-time Reserve Force Veterans (Class B more than 180 days or Class C) to that of a basic Corporal in the

Standard pay group, which in 2013-14, results in an ELB of \$41,598 pre-tax per year.

Alternatively, under the *Government Employees Compensation Act* (GECA), part-time Reservists (Class A and Class B less than 180 days) who are injured on duty are eligible for benefits such as medical care, income replacement, a permanent impairment/disability award if applicable and home adaptations. The benefits and services vary by province as the injured Reservist receives benefits and services under the applicable provincial compensation board in addition to Federal benefits and services.

**2012 DOMINION CONVENTION
RESOLUTION 10
DOMINION COMMAND
ADVOCACY - ESCORT FEE FOR IMMEDIATE FAMILY
LIVING WITH VETERAN**

WHEREAS the present policy in VAC is that escort fees are only paid to immediate family members who do not live with the Veteran; and

WHEREAS immediate family members who live with the Veteran spend their time looking after the Veteran, and thus solving the problem of having the government having to provide a bed in a Long Term facility or Retirement home; and

WHEREAS a person who is not an immediate family member who lives with the Veteran can receive the escort fee payment; and

WHEREAS this ruling discriminates against the most likely person who should be “escorting” the Veteran, ie an immediate family member living with the Veteran.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the rule be changed to allow for an immediate family member living with the Veteran to be entitled to an escort fee.

Response to Resolution 10

It is correct that under Veterans Affairs Canada’s authorities, as outlined in the *Veterans Health Care Regulations*, it is not possible to pay a spouse, partner, dependent or any other member of the Veteran’s household a daily escort fee to accompany a Veteran to a medical or rehabilitation services appointment. However, Veterans Affairs Canada can reimburse a family member’s travel-related costs to escort a Veteran to a medical or rehabilitation services appointment provided they have been pre-authorized by Veterans Affairs Canada. These travel-related costs include transportation, meals and accommodation.

**2012 DOMINION CONVENTION
RESOLUTION 11
DOMINION COMMAND
ADVOCACY - INCREASE OF SURVIVOR /
DEPENDENT ESTATE EXEMPTION**

WHEREAS in February 1995 the Government of Canada reduced the Survivor/Dependent Estate Exemption from \$24,030 to \$12,015, a contributing factor for the approval or denial of funeral & burial benefits for Veterans; and

WHEREAS the reduced exemption is considerably less than the poverty level, denying funeral & burial benefits to hundreds of Veterans which creates an additional burden on families of Veterans; and

WHEREAS prior to 1995 the exemption was subject to indexing based on annual changes to the Consumer Price Index (CPI).

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that we strongly urge the Minister of Veterans Affairs take necessary action to restore the Survivor/Dependent Estate Exemption to a level not less than the poverty level as determined by Statistics Canada; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a Cost of Living Allowance (COLA) be introduced equal to Statistic Canada's annual adjusted CPI.

Response to Resolution 11

When determining the assets of the Veteran's estate as part of the means testing to establish financial need, the survivor's primary home, car and \$12,015 are all excluded. With these two key assets excluded from the calculation; our Government then proposed, in Economic Action Plan 2013, to double the financial benefit and to cut red tape plaguing the program. The Government will continue to work with the Royal Canadian Legion to ensure that Veterans continue to receive the support they need for funeral and burial costs. More details will be announced as the changes are formally introduced.

**2012 DOMINION CONVENTION
RESOLUTION 12
DOMINION COMMAND
ADVOCACY- INCREASE FUNERAL & BURIAL
BENEFITS FOR VETERANS**

WHEREAS the current maximum allowable payment to cover professional services at a funeral home is \$3600 under the *Veterans Burial Regulations 2005* which govern the Veterans Affairs Canada Funeral & Burial Program administered by the Last Post Fund; and

WHEREAS the amount has not increased since November 2001 when it was raised from \$2993 and has not kept pace with the average rising cost of funeral services as noted by the Canadian Funeral Services Association; and

WHEREAS the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) and the Department of National Defense (DND) increased their maximum allowable payments to \$14,320 as the result of public outcry and media coverage:

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that we strongly urge the Minister of Veterans Affairs take necessary action to increase the maximum allowable payment for the Veterans Affairs Canada Funeral & Burial Program to the equivalent level established for the RCMP and DND in recognition that their service to Canada is of equal importance; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a Cost of Living Allowance (COLA) be introduced equal to Statistics Canada's annual adjusted CPI.

Response to Resolution 12

Our Government's Funeral and Burial Program is one of the most comprehensive among Allied countries. Economic Action Plan 2013 proposes to double the financial benefit available to a Veterans' family from \$3,600 to \$7,376. Furthermore, efforts are underway to simplify the program resulting in less paperwork and a seamless process, as Canadian Veterans expect.

All Veterans who die of a service-related illness or injury, whether they served in times of war, armed conflict or peace, are entitled to funeral and burial assistance. Assistance may also be provided in cases where death is not attributed to service, if the Veteran's estate meets the criteria. More than 18,000 Veterans' families have benefited from the Funeral and Burial Program over the last 10 years.

**2012 DOMINION CONVENTION
RESOLUTION 13
DOMINION COMMAND
ADVOCACY- FUNERAL AND BURIAL BENEFITS FOR
CANADIAN FORCES VETERANS**

WHEREAS benefits under the Veterans Affairs Canada Funeral & Burial Program are not offered to those who have served in the regular or reserve components of the Canadian Forces since the end of the Korean War unless they are in receipt of a disability benefit or earnings loss benefit from Veterans Affairs Canada; and

WHEREAS Canadian Forces Veterans who lack sufficient funds are being denied a dignified funeral and burial; and

WHEREAS the Last Post Fund has determined that extending eligibility to these Canadian Forces members will create a pool of nearly 600,000 Veterans who might qualify for the Veterans Affairs Canada Funeral & Burial Program.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that we strongly urge the Minister of Veterans Affairs to take the necessary action to permit all Canadian Forces Veterans to become eligible to receive VAC benefits and services under the Funeral & Burial Program.

Response to Resolution 13

Our Government's Funeral and Burial Program is one of the most comprehensive among Allied countries. Economic Action Plan 2013 proposes to double the financial benefit available to a Veterans' family from \$3,600 to \$7,376. Furthermore, efforts are underway to simplify the program resulting in less paperwork and a seamless process, as Canadian Veterans expect.

The Funeral and Burial Program provides funeral and burial assistance to Canadian Armed Forces Veterans who die of a service-related injury or illness, and has done so 18,000 times over the past ten years.

Some modern-day Veterans are also eligible if they are in financial need and are in receipt of a Veterans Affairs Canada disability benefit, Earnings Loss Benefit or Canadian Forces Income Support benefit.