



Standing Committee on Finance
Sixth Floor, 131 Queen Street
House of Commons
Ottawa ON K1A 0A6
Canada

August 5, 2016

Dear Committee Members,

I write to you on behalf of the Centre for Israel and Jewish Affairs, the advocacy agent of the Jewish Federations of Canada. As you consider suggestions for the 2017 federal budget, I would like to highlight some of our community's public policy priorities with budgetary implications.

Security Infrastructure: Public Safety Canada's Security Infrastructure Program (SIP) assists communities at risk of hate-motivated crime to improve security infrastructure for places of worship, schools and community centres. The needs and number of at-risk groups, the nature of threats and the cost of security measures have changed since the SIP's creation in 2008. The relatively modest funding level (\$3 million) and structure of the program, currently limited to external measures and contingent on geographical, historical and financial conditions, can be significantly improved. Modernizing the SIP would have a significant impact on at-risk groups, who should not have to absorb on their own the high economic and social costs of securing their communities as a prerequisite for full participation in Canadian society.

Affordable Housing: According to the Jewish Federations of Canada's analysis of the 2011 National Household Survey, 14.6% of Jewish Canadian lives in poverty, including one in six Jewish seniors. Many of them rely on government-subsidized housing. We welcomed the Government of Canada's 10-year commitment to social infrastructure and the allocation of \$2.3 billion over two years for affordable housing in the 2016 budget. We hope that the 2017 budget will include additional, long-term support for affordable housing to ensure sustained access for vulnerable Canadians, particularly seniors.

Palliative Care: High-quality palliative care services are currently accessible to fewer than 30% of Canadians. Even where appropriate palliative care policies and procedures are in place, there is often a lack of resources, training and access that limits provision of care. We are encouraged by the Minister of Health's mandate to provide financial supports for palliative care and the government's commitment to invest \$3 billion in more and better home care services, including palliative care. We hope the 2017 federal budget will address the need to:

- Develop a pan-Canadian palliative and end-of-life care strategy;
- Increase availability and accessibility of essential hospice and palliative care services in all settings;
- Improve the quality and consistency of palliative and end-of-life care; and
- Provide more support for family caregivers, in the form of flexible financial and tax benefits.
- Ensure that the healthcare system respects the psycho- social and spiritual needs of patients and their families.



Charitable Giving: We welcomed the government's plan to increase the tax credit for charitable gifts for those with income exceeding \$200,000 to the level of the new top tax rate (33%). This prevents a disincentive for charitable giving in the top income tier on whom many charities rely most heavily for support. Deductions for charitable gifts were previously tied to the lowest and highest personal income tax rates for donations below and above \$200 respectively. We believe the government should consider raising the tax credit for charitable gifts to the new top tax rate (33%) for all Canadians, regardless of their income, even if this new rate is applied to donations over another benchmark greater than \$200. This would ensure that Canadians are equally incentivized to give charitably, enjoying the same benefits from doing so, helping to grow the important charitable sector of Canada's economy and society.

Security Oversight: As parliament moves forward with debate on Bill C-22, the National Security and Intelligence Committee of Parliamentarians Act, it is essential that the agencies and bodies tasked with ensuring a proper balance between public safety and civil rights are provided with sufficient resources. During committee hearings on Bill C-51 in the previous parliament, CIJA called for an expansion of resources available to SIRC to help ensure its continuing effectiveness. The 2015 budget allocated \$12.5 million to SIRC over five years and \$2.5 million annually thereafter. It is imperative that SIRC and, should Bill C-22 become law, the new committee of parliamentarians, have the financial and human resources required to perform their duties effectively.

Thank you for your consideration. I would be pleased to appear before the committee to discuss these issues in greater depth.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be "SKF", is located below the word "Sincerely,". The signature is stylized and somewhat abstract.

Shimon Koffler Fogel, CEO
The Centre for Israel and Jewish Affairs