

Honourable Kathleen Wynne
Premier of Ontario
Room 281
111 Wellesley Street West
Toronto, Ontario M7A 1A1

April 26th, 2013

Dear Premier Wynne,

I am writing to you today to express concerns related to supports for Ontarians with disabilities. In particular I have concerns related to recent and possible future changes to the Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP).

I understand the need for reform of social assistance, and hope for positive changes that can improve the lives of people with disabilities in Ontario and assist in reducing the burdens of poverty. Ontarians with disabilities have very special and unique needs and find it increasingly difficult to exist in poverty.

The recommendations in the Report of the Commission for the Review of Social Assistance appear to take supports away from people with disabilities to achieve their goals. I would like to express the need to retain benefits and supports for the Ontario Disability Support Program. Financial assistance only provides recipients with an income of about 60% of the poverty line. These rates for the Ontario Works program are even lower at about 30%. The ability to sustain any measurable quality of life at these levels is compromised. With rising costs for household goods and expenses, the static or low rate increases have made lives on social assistance even harder as time has progressed.

I am deeply concerned with the recommendation to merge the Ontario Works and Ontario Disability Support Program. This is inconsistent with the needs of Ontarians with disabilities and will create a patchwork of services Province wide.

I am requesting that the Community Start-Up and Maintenance Benefit (CSUMB) be reinstated. Using a pool of funds model instead of an eligibility based model will result in Ontarians in need being left out in the cold in the latter parts of the year. While supports should be available to assist all low income individuals and families, removing the CSUMB has already had a detrimental impact on the most vulnerable Ontarians.

I hope that you will take the time to consider this appeal for sensible reforms that will improve the quality of life for those living on social assistance and allow all Ontarians to live with dignity and respect.

Sincerely,

Signature

Address