

Ottawa Journal: October 1 is National Seniors Day

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Senior citizens from coast to coast to coast have built Canada and have made it the best country in the world.

They've worked hard and have made invaluable contributions to our economy and society. They fill the immensely important roles of parents, grandparents, and great grandparents. They're also role models we look up to, volunteers in our communities, and touch our lives each day through the wisdom and experience they share with us.

October 1 is National Seniors Day and is an excellent opportunity for all of us to show our deep appreciation to seniors for their important contributions to our families, communities, and country. It's also an opportunity to call upon the current government to finally appoint a Minister for Seniors and develop a comprehensive National Seniors Strategy to address the growing needs of Canada's seniors.

Currently, Canada's seniors are the fastest growing demographic in our country. Today, one in six Canadians is a senior. In 13 years, one in four Canadians will be a senior. This underscores the need to make this demographic a priority for the federal government. Today's seniors face many complex issues, which need to be addressed, such as: palliative care; quality homecare, including resources to help seniors remain in their own homes for as long as possible; elder abuse; financial security; and the need for establishing a national strategy for Alzheimer's disease and other dementias, to name but a few.

Unfortunately, the current Liberal government has failed to recognize the growing needs of Canadian seniors.

Our country's seniors are asking the current government to develop a comprehensive National Seniors Strategy that would listen to and work towards addressing their unique and growing needs.

If a strategy isn't put into place, the government won't have a sustainable plan to adequately respond. The first step to developing a strategy would be to re-appoint a Minister for Seniors who could begin the process of developing a strategy. In doing so, this would help the government identify what is required to best address the needs of Canadian seniors.

Unfortunately, the current government has not appointed such a minister, even though it has a Minister for Youth and a Minister for Families. Therefore, without a Minister for Seniors in place, the current government is neglecting the priorities of Canada's fastest growing demographic - the very Canadians who helped build and shape our great country.

On October 1, let's thank Canada's seniors on National Seniors Day for the difference they've made and continue to make in our lives and communities, and for making Canada the best country in the world.

Furthermore, let's join together to appeal to the current government to take decisive action on appointing a Minister for Seniors to begin the process of establishing a National Seniors Strategy.