

Life after service

Dear editor:

Often I am asked to explain how our Government has invested over \$4.7 billion new dollars since 2006 to improve Veterans' benefits and services during a time when departments across the Federal Government are facing reductions. To help illustrate these investments in greater detail, I would like to point out a few key findings from the recently released 2013 Veterans Life After Service study:

? Our men and women still serving in uniform make on average \$70,000 a year which is one third greater than the average Canadian income

? The rate of low-income among Veterans is half the rate found in the general population.

? 3 years after leaving the Canadian Armed Forces an injured Veteran's average income stands at \$70,700 a year or \$5,891 a month

With a injured Veteran earning \$70,000 a year, 3 years after their release, it is clear our policies are having a positive effect; but more can and must be done.

Our focus must remain on those Veterans who are injured in service to Canada and that is why I have asked the Parliamentary Committee to focus their review on how to improve benefits for Veterans; what we can do for Veterans' families; and how Veterans Affairs delivers the programs in the first place.

The unanimity of the recently released committee report shows a common desire of all members to improve the New Veterans Charter for Veterans and their families. While we undertake the important responsibility it is comforting to know, thanks to Statistics Canada and Veterans Affairs research team, that injured Veterans are receiving solid financial income.

Lest we forget

Julian Fantino PC, MP

Minister of Veterans Affairs