

We write to see if your organization would be agreeable to be listed as a signatory on a new (and hopefully last) open letter to the House of Commons on Bill C-22, the proposed Canada Disability Benefit Act. I set the letter out below.

Last February, the House of Commons passed Bill C-22 and sent it to the Senate. On May 18, 2023, the Senate passed Bill C-22 with a short list of amendments. The bill now goes back to the House of Commons for a vote on whether the House will ratify the Senate's amendments. If the House ratifies the Senate's amendments, then Bill C-22 is passed. If the House rejects any of the Senate's amendments, then the bill must go back to the Senate. That will likely lead to months of delay.

We want the House of Commons to receive a strong message that it should vote to ratify the Senate's amendments, and that it should do so immediately. If you are prepared to have your organization listed on this open letter, please email me as soon as possible. We want to get this open letter sent later this week. Of course, we can also add additional organizations to it later, if you need more time.

Please feel free to email or call if you have any questions. If you want to know more background on Bill C-22, feel free to check out the AODA Alliance website's [Bill C-22 page](#).

Hope you are well. !

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## **May 26, 2023 Open Letter to the House of Commons Calling for It to Immediately Ratify the Senate's Amendments to Bill C-22 the Canada Disability Benefit Act**

Far too many people with disabilities now languish in poverty. We, the undersigned organizations and groups, commend the Government of Canada for committing to create a new Canada Disability Benefit. It is needed to lift people with disabilities in Canada out of poverty.

We thank the Federal Government for committing in Parliament that no person living with disabilities in Canada should live in poverty, and for introducing into Parliament Bill C-22, the Canada Disability Benefit Act. We also thank all political parties for voting last February in the House of Commons to pass Bill C-22.

On May 18, 2023 the Senate of Canada passed Bill C-22 with several amendments. These amendments:

- Prevent insurance companies from clawing back the Canada Disability Benefit from a person with disabilities who receives long-term disability benefits under an insurance policy or employee plan.
- Guarantee that there will be a right of appeal for applicants for the Canada Disability Benefit.

- Require Cabinet to take into account the poverty line, the additional costs of living with a disability, the intersectional disadvantages facing disadvantaged groups, and Canada’s international human rights obligations when deciding how much the Canada Disability Benefit payment will be to impoverished people with disabilities. Before this amendment, the bill required Cabinet to consider only the poverty line.
- Set a 1-year deadline for regulations to be enacted that are necessary to start paying out the Canada Disability Benefit to impoverished people with disabilities.
- Correct an error that the House of Commons Standing Committee on Human Resources, Skills and Social Development and the Status of Persons with Disabilities (HUMA Committee) inadvertently made last fall when amending Section 14 of the bill which governs when the bill comes into force. Last fall’s HUMA amendment to Section 14 left it unclear when Bill C-22 would come into force. By the Senate’s amendment, the Federal Cabinet can proclaim Bill C-22 in force on a date that it chooses. However, the bill would automatically come into force one year after the bill got Royal Assent if Cabinet had not yet proclaimed it in force.
- Add the following to the bill’s preamble:

“Whereas persons with disabilities may face additional barriers because of their gender, racialized or indigenous status or other intersecting statuses;”.

People with disabilities need Bill C-22 passed as soon as possible. For it to be passed, the House of Commons must vote to ratify the Senate’s amendments to the bill. If the House of Commons votes against ratifying any of the Senate’s amendments, then the bill’s passage will be delayed for months, as it must go back to the Senate once again.

The undersigned organizations and groups call on all parties and all MPs in the House of Commons to take these actions:

1. Please agree to schedule an immediate vote in the House of Commons on the Senate’s amendments to Bill C-22.
2. Please vote to ratify all the Senate’s amendments to bill C-22.
3. If any party leader does not commit their own party to vote in favour of ratifying all the Senate’s amendments to Bill C-22, we urge that party leader to allow their MPs to have a free vote on the issue. This would let any individual MP in their caucus vote in favour of ratifying all the Senate’s amendments to Bill C-22.

Signatories