



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

August 4, 2017

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 2018 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. We welcomed the increase of funds allocated to this program in the 2017 budget, which should address the shortfall many communities are currently experiencing, with crucial infrastructure proposals being rejected due to lack of funds. The allocation of additional funds would enable further modernization of the SIP to better protect at-risk institutions. Specifically, expansion of the program to include support for human resources, training, an increase to the funding cap for each individual grant and an exemption for the 50/50 cost sharing formula for institutions that can demonstrate financial need would go a long way to removing barriers to access the program and ensuring its maximum effectiveness.

**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 commitment to support affordable housing in the 2017 budget. However, despite these important steps, the housing needs of Canadians with disabilities are still often overlooked as governments tackle broader challenges of poverty. To counteract this, we recommend the government explicitly earmark in the 2018 budget a set allocation of affordable housing funds for people with disabilities. This should include 5% of total affordable housing spending directed to support people with developmental disabilities, who are most acutely impacted.

**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 hope the 2018 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.

**Combating Hate:** The Jewish community continues to be one of Canada's most frequent victims of hate crime. Most recently, a June 2015 Statistics Canada report concluded that Jewish Canadians continue to be targeted with hate more than any other religious minority in Canada. To combat hate that sadly persists in targeting a wide array of identifiable groups across Canada, the government should consider allocating resources to support the development of dedicated police hate crime units, modeled on those established in British Columbia, Montreal and other jurisdictions. Additionally, the government should consider supporting a national education campaign, for police, prosecutors and the public, about the dangers of hate speech to ensure that it is taken seriously in every instance.

**Green Infrastructure for Community Institutions:** The Jewish community, like other communities across Canada, recognizes the imperative of ensuring a sustainable future for all Canadians. In this regard, we believe the government can help encourage a significant reduction in our collective ecological footprint by providing support for green communal infrastructure, such as incentives for green renovation or building of community centres and houses of worship.

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 read 'SKF', written over a circular scribble.

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