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STEPHANIE KUSIE, M.P.
CALGARY MIDNAPORE

2 April 2020

The Honourable Ahmed Hussen
Minister of Families, Children and Social Development
House of Commons
Ottawa, ON K1A 0A6

Dear Minister Hussen:

Thank you for your service during this time of crisis.

It has come to my attention that that currently Service Canada (and Canada Revenue Agency) are experiencing technical difficulties with their phone services and online systems.

As I'm certain you are aware, this is a critical time as many Canadians are already applying for EI and more will be trying to apply for the Canada Emergency Relief Benefit (CERB) starting this Monday, April 6th, 2020. I can only expect the numbers of Canadians in need of these supports to continue to increase over the coming days and weeks.

As an increasing number of Canadians are in need of financial relief from COVID-19 impacts, the effective delivery of these benefits is crucial. Therefore, I would appreciate your response to what I feel are urgent questions:

- How, or are you, working with your colleague the Minister of Revenue to ensure that current EI applications are transferred seamlessly to the CERB program as we have been advised will take place?
- Will Service Canada representatives be able to assist Canadians going forward or will all future calls about CERB have to go solely through CRA?
- Given that the government announced April 6th as the date applications will be accepted almost three weeks ago, what steps have been taken to ensure Canadians can speak to a Service Canada (or Canada Revenue Agency Representative) if they are experiencing difficulties creating or accessing MyAccount?
- Given that both Service Canada and CRA phone lines are both currently experiencing technical difficulties due to call volumes, what measures have been put in place to ensure Service Canada does not experience similar problems and can handle increasingly large call volumes?

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- How many applicants for the Canada Emergency Relief Benefit is the Government expecting?
- Is the program still on track to deliver benefits within 10 days of application?
- Will MPs continue to have access to assistance and information from Service Canada?

We are all working with timelines established by the Liberal government. Canadians, who have been without any income for several weeks, are already experiencing difficulties applying for benefits online, and will need to have the ability to speak with a Government of Canada representative. These are unprecedented times and Canadians need to know that the government will successfully deliver these essential benefits in a timely matter.

I look forward to your response, and hope I can count on you to continue to keep me updated on these issues.

Sincerely,

Stephanie Kusie, MP
Shadow Minister for Families, Children and Social Development