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News Release

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Expectant Mothers Fall Through the Cracks

Calgary, AB — Stephanie Kusie, Member of Parliament for Calgary Midnapore and Shadow Minister for Families, is asking Canadian women unfairly forced to start using their EI maternity benefits during the COVID-19 pandemic to write to the Minister to help ensure the Liberal government takes the situation seriously.

Kusie learned that expectant mothers who lost their jobs and applied for Employment Insurance (EI) after March 15, 2020, were not moved over from EI to the Canada Emergency Response Benefit (CERB) system (like everyone else) to receive their benefits. Rather, pregnant women were made to receive EI and not CERB -- even if their child was not due for several months. The consequence of this action: a massive cut into their eligible maternity benefits, and a significant reduction in the amount of time mothers would be eligible for benefits after their child is born.

“For months now, the Liberal government has repeatedly assured Canadians that they are working hard to prevent anyone from ‘falling through the cracks’, but they let it happen to expectant mothers,” explained Kusie. “It wasn’t until myself and other Members of the Official Opposition pointed out this grievous problem in writing and in Committee, that Minister Qualtrough expressed a commitment to remedy the problem.”

“Apparently a defect in the outdated technology that supports the EI system unfairly targeted a vulnerable population. Because the COBOL system is 46 years old and not designed to accommodate these sorts of changes, who is to say this won’t happen again?” she pointed out. “This just helps illustrate the need for oversight from Opposition parties. We have been putting forth solutions to help make legislation and programs better for all Canadians, and will continue to do so, despite clear efforts on behalf of the government to undermine the democratic role of the Opposition.”

To contact Ministers Qualtrough and Hussen, expectant mothers who have been affected by this unfortunate error can fill out the “More Supports for Expectant Mothers” form letter at www.stephaniekusiemp.ca.

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