

Dear

I am writing you to as a member of the Rehoboth Christian Ministries Association, a leading agency providing supports across Alberta to approximately 200 adults with developmental disabilities. I write to appeal to you and your colleague to provide sufficient wage funding to our frontline essential workers.

You may not be aware that our frontline employees have not seen an increase in wage funding from the Alberta government in eight years. Not since April 2014. Imagine that.

Disability service workers provide vital supports to thousands of Albertans with disabilities. Effective support comes when professional staff can build relationships with those they support. When excellent support workers can focus on their job – and not on one or two other jobs to make ends meet for their families – the lives of Albertans with disabilities can be transformed.

Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, every disability worker has placed their health and the health of their families at risk to support Albertans with disabilities. We call them essential. The Alberta government calls them essential. The world-over calls health and support workers essential.

Isn't it time support agencies in Alberta with the necessary funding to provide our essential workers with a dignified wage?

The problem has also been compounded: Rehoboth, like so many agencies, is currently in a staffing crisis. We are experiencing staffing shortages across the province. They are doing everything we can to recruit new employees, but resumes are not coming in. Starting wages are simply too low.

Please consider these matters and discuss them with your colleagues. As an MLA, you will soon have opportunity to learn about an initiative the Alberta government is funding: a KPMG study into the labour challenges service providers are experiencing. The study is entitled *Project Blueprint CDS: Key Challenges, Labour Market Analysis, and Recommendations*. I encourage you to become familiar with this study when it is presented to government, and advocate for its recommendations.

Mahatma Gandhi once said: "The true measure of any society can be found in how it treats its most vulnerable members." It remains true today.

Thank you. We wish you the Lord's strength in all your work on behalf of the people of Alberta.

C: **Honourable Jeremy Nixon**, Minister of Seniors, Community and Social Services  
**Cynthia Farmer**, Deputy Minister for Seniors, Community and Social Services  
**Marie Renaud**, Critic for Seniors, Community and Social Services