

SOCIAL JUSTICE

Hilarion Mitchell

Happy New year!

It is a time start anew, to refresh, filled with hope for what is to come.

“Hope does not disappoint” (Rom 5:5)

*“Everyone knows what it is to hope. In the heart of each person, hope dwells as the desire and expectation of good things to come, despite our not knowing what the future may bring. Even so, uncertainty about the future may at times give rise to conflicting feelings, ranging from confident trust to apprehensiveness, from serenity to anxiety, from firm conviction to hesitation and doubt.” (This **Jubilee 2025 Pilgrims of Hope** year, in Pope Francis, 'Spes non confundit').)*

In addition to being personally hopeful, we can bring hope to others. Social justice issues such as affordability, hunger, housing, fair wages, the environment, human trafficking and world conflicts, continue. *“We must fan the flame of hope that has been given us and help everyone to gain new strength and certainty by looking to the future with an open spirit, a trusting heart and far-sighted vision.” (Pope Francis)*

When League members speak out on an issue our voices hold influence and power and are heard. A few items in the news and/or brought to my attention are notable.

1) GST/HST Tax Exemption

This new tax break began December 14, 2024 and will last until February 15, 2025.

It applies to several things including children's' clothing and footwear, car seats and diapers. Our 2017.03 Zero-Rated Status Under the Goods and Services Tax Provisions of the Excise Tax Act for Child Safety Products resolution (still active) requests the removal of GST on child safety products. (link below)



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It's a good time to connect with your local MP and discuss our resolution asking that the government extend this tax exemption indefinitely and extend it to include all regulated child safety products. In this way, the federal government can show support for children's safety and ease the financial burden on families.

2017.03 Zero-Rated Status Under the Goods and Services Tax Provisions of the Excise Tax Act for Child Safety Products

2) Proposed Amendments to Ontario Regulation 246/22 (Regulation) under the Fixing Long-Term Care Act, 2021 (FLTCA) to enable a Long-Term Care (LTC) Homes Cultural Pilot Project.

The government is planning to conduct a pilot to see if they can modify their plans to give some recognition to the unintended consequences arising from resident placement. Persons who are strangers to the environment of the faith/culturally based nursing home are plunked there because that home has the first available bed. The other side of the coin is that persons needing admission to the faith/culturally based home have to wait longer because the bed is taken by someone not needing that environment.

3) Bill C-61, the First Nations Clean Water Act

Visit both the national and provincial websites for more background on the legislations and active League resolutions.

(Legislative submissions from committee member Betsy Currier)

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Letter Writing

In 2025, there will be potential provincial and federal elections. Writing to your elected officials and elections candidates are an effective way to communicate your concerns to decision makers and advocate for solutions. This tactic can be especially effective when many write letters about the same issue. People write letters to elected officials for a variety of reasons:

- to encourage a specific action or outcome (e.g. encouraging inclusion of coverage of drugs prescribed for mental illness in the National Universal Pharmacare Program – National Resolution 2024.02, action item #2)
- to discourage a specific action or outcome (e.g. eliminating the Mature Minor Doctrine in Mental Health – ON.24.02, action item #1)
- to increase awareness and understanding of an issue or concern (e.g. 2023.01 Combating Textile Waste in Canada, action items #1, 2 & 3)
- to make sure elected officials know that an issue is important to their constituents.

See next page for the sample letter template



Template Letter Example

Date

Minister of Long Term Care
Honourable Natalia Kusendova-Bashta
400 University Avenue, 6th Floor
Toronto, ON
M7A 1N3

RE: Proposed Amendments to Ontario Regulation 246/22
(Regulation) under the Fixing Long-Term Care Act, 2021 (FLTCA) to
enable a Long-Term Care (LTC) Homes Cultural Pilot Project.

Dear Minister,

I am writing this in relation to the government's proposal to enable better access to cultural, ethnic, faith-based, and linguistically specific care.

As a caregiver and family member of a resident at [Home Name], which provides great care for those from the [specific community] community. Knowing that my loved one is in an environment where their language, traditions, and beliefs are respected has provided immense comfort to our family. This level of care not only ensures their well-being but also allows them to maintain a sense of connection and identity.

[If you wish, share personal details about the person who provide care for and why the home matters to them, include how the home is important to you, activities the home provides that matter, and the value of the home to your community]

This home is so vital to having a place those in my community can age well while honouring what matters most to us; and this pilot is important to ensure [home name] can continue to serve my [relationship to resident] and my community.

Letter continued on next page...

Unfortunately, I know that many families are unable to access this kind of care due to systemic barriers in the admissions process. I fully support the pilot project as a necessary step to ensure that cultural homes can continue to serve the communities they were created for and provide the peace of mind that comes with knowing our loved ones are cared for in a familiar and supportive environment.

I encourage the opportunity for all interested homes currently offering cultural, ethnic, faith-based, and linguistically specific care to participate in the pilot. Should that not be possible, a transparent selection process for pilot homes to ensure equity of access and minimize disadvantages for homes not included in the pilot.

I would also request that clear success measures, including appropriate timelines, to track and evaluate the pilot's outcomes, be developed in collaboration with long-term care homes.

Lastly, it is important that there be a standardized process that is responsible to local community needs for designating cultural, ethnic, faith-based, and linguistically specific homes.

I strongly support the proposed pilot project, as it will help ensure all can access long-term care that aligns with their cultural and personal needs. This is an important step towards a more inclusive and equitable long-term care system that reflects the diverse needs of Ontario's population.

Regards or sincerely,
Your name