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*Speaking notes for*  
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**For an appearance before the  
Standing Committee on Veterans Affairs**

**On Recognition of Persian Gulf War Veterans**

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**Canada**

Thank you for the invitation to appear before the Committee today.

To begin, let me first say that our Government is grateful for the dedicated service of all Canadian Armed Forces members and Veterans, including those who served in the Persian Gulf from 1990 to 1991.

More than 4,000 Canadians were part of the international coalition of nations that fought to return freedom to the people of Kuwait.

Plus de 30 ans plus tard, nous reconnaissons que servir dans des conditions aussi stressantes a fait payer un lourd tribut à de nombreux militaires.

En ce qui concerne la reconnaissance, Monsieur le Président, nous comprenons que certains vétérans du golfe Persique s'interrogent sur la manière dont leur service dans ce conflit est désigné.

Under the current legislative framework, and designation practices within the CAF, the Persian Gulf is designated as the highest level of risk, a Special Duty Area.

Throughout the years, Veterans shared that the programs delivered under the *Pension Act* were no longer meeting the needs of modern-day CAF Veterans and their families.

Changing demographics coupled with the need to respond to the changing needs of modern Veterans prompted a replacement of the *Pension Act* in 2006, which was supported by all parties in the House of Commons.

The New Veterans Charter, later called the *Veterans Well-Being Act* provides comprehensive rehabilitation— medical, psycho-social and vocational support, financial benefits, disability benefits, career transition services, access to the Public Service Health Care Plan, and one-on-one case management for most complex cases.

While the *Pension Act* addressed the needs of Veterans through a single method of support — the disability pension—the *Veterans Well-being Act* was designed to provide a more varied suite of benefits in order to meet Veterans where they are in terms of post-service needs.

Whereas most First and Second World War Veterans were leaving the military in similar stages of life—and therefore had similar needs—modern-era Veterans can make this transition at any change, whether early on in their careers, or later in life.

Through the *Veterans Well-being Act*, the government announced its Pension for Life plan which:

- Reintroduced lifelong monthly payments with the Pain and Suffering Compensation;
- Established a new recognition benefit, the Additional Pain and Suffering Compensation; and,
- Introduced the Income Replacement Benefit to simplify VAC's financial support programs by streamlining six different financial benefits into one: the new Income Replacement Benefit.

We brought in better support for the families of ill and injured Veterans, including their caregivers, by:

- Eliminating time limits on vocational rehabilitation for Veterans' survivors and spouses;
- Expanding access to Military Family Resource Centres;
- Introducing the Caregiver Recognition Benefit;

Pour répondre à la demande et aux besoins croissants des vétérans, notre gouvernement a investi 11 milliards de dollars dans les prestations et les services.

Nous avons également apporté des changements pour améliorer les soins de santé mentale en introduisant l'approbation automatique des demandes de soins de santé mentale afin que les vétérans puissent obtenir l'aide dont ils ont besoin quand ils en ont besoin.

Modern Veterans, including those who served in the Persian Gulf, have sacrificed for our country.

We owe them a debt of gratitude that we can never fully repay.

Je vous assure que je prends au sérieux ma responsabilité en tant que leur ministre. Et en tant que gouvernement, nous sommes déterminés à faire en sorte que les vétérans reçoivent le soutien dont ils ont besoin pendant leur transition et après leur service.



Cet engagement s'étend également aux aspects commémoratifs de la reconnaissance, qui peuvent influencer la façon dont les vétérans se perçoivent et se sentent appréciés par leurs concitoyens.

It is my priority to ensure that Veterans – no matter when they served, whether it was in Persian Gulf, serving on humanitarian missions, supporting Canadians impacted by the forest fires in Jasper, or through Search and Rescue operations – are recognized for their service.

À l'approche de la Semaine des vétérans, je tiens à ce que tous les vétérans et leur famille sachent que nous pensons à eux et que nous apprécions et reconnaissons les nombreux sacrifices qu'ils ont consentis au service du Canada.

And lastly, to those Veterans who shared their stories-- thank you. And to those listening today – thank you for your service to Canada – we remain a grateful nation.

Thank you.