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September 19, 2012

The Right Honourable Stephen Harper
 Prime Minister of Canada
 Office of the Prime Minister
 80 Wellington Street
 Ottawa, Ontario
 K1A 0N2

LEGISLATIVE SERVICES	
COPY TO:	FOR:
Chair	✓ Committee
CAO	✓
Corporate Services	Council
Public Works	WMB RC
Employee and Business Services	2012
Health Services	File
Human Services	✓
Peel Living	

Dear Prime Minister Harper:

Subject: A Call for all levels of Government in Canada to develop and/or expand affordable supportive housing strategies

At the July 2012 Convention of the Eastern Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada, delegates representing more than 200 congregations from Nova Scotia to Sault Ste. Marie, ON, passed a motion calling on all provincial, territorial, federal and municipal governments to develop and/or expand affordable supportive housing strategies that will prevent and alleviate homelessness and address the independent living needs of seniors and others facing challenges to independent living.

Recognizing that governments are able to act to alleviate homelessness only with the support of local communities, the Assembly also encouraged their congregations and members to support such housing initiatives in their communities.

We believe that this motion is based not only on spiritual and humanitarian concern but also on good science. The rationale for the motion noted that:

- Long term housing instability can create a cycle where people keep moving in and out of shelters, hospitals or correctional facilities ... “the use of various emergency services (e.g. police, EMS, hospitals) is roughly 10 times more expensive than the provision of housing with support services..” (All Roads Lead to Home –Region of Waterloo 2007)
- The Federal government’s commitment to ongoing funding for homelessness alleviation and affordable housing ceases on March 31, 2014.
- The importance of housing to stabilize individuals and families is highlighted in the report “The Housing First Model: Immediate Access to Permanent Housing”. (E. Nick Faldo in Canadian Housing 2008). The Canadian Senate in their December 2009 sub-committee report on *Cities, In from the Margins: A Call to Action on Poverty, Housing and Homelessness* makes a number of recommendations to address the housing needs of Canadians
 - By 2016, 16.3% of the Canadian population will be over 65 and by 2025 one in five Canadians will be over 65 (CMHC)

- People with mental health issues are more vulnerable to homelessness and represent a visible portion of the homeless population. (CMHC Research Highlight Report – May 2011)
- 25% of Canadians over 55 years old want to remain in their present home for as long as possible even if there are changes to their health (Impacts of Aging of the Canadian Population on Housing and Communities – CMHC 2008)
- As the baby boom population ages more and more seniors will require some supports to live independently in the community or in a supportive housing setting (as opposed to a nursing home).
- The waiting list for housing with support continues to grow in most urban centres (Homeless and Housing Umbrella Group – 2011 Report Card)

Prime Minister Harper, we hold your federal government together with all provincial, territorial, and municipal governments in our prayers and we expect that each level of our government will take bold new actions to develop and/or expand affordable supportive housing strategies for the most vulnerable among us.

With all of God's blessings,

Sincerely,

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Rev Dr Michael Pryse, Bishop
Eastern Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada
MP/ca

- c. The Honourable Thomas Mulcair, Leader of the Official Opposition
The Honourable Bob Rae, Acting Leader of the Liberal Party
Daniel Paillé, Leader of the Bloc Québécois
Alison Redford, Premier of Alberta
Christy Clark, Premier of British Columbia
Gregory Selinger, Premier of Manitoba
David Alward, Premier of New Brunswick
Kathy Dunderdale, Premier of Newfoundland and Labrador
Bob McLeod, Premier of Northwest Territories
Darrell Dexter, Premier of Nova Scotia
Eva Aariak, Premier of Nunavut
Dalton McGuinty, Premier of Ontario
Robert W. J. Ghiz, Premier of Prince Edward Island
Pauline Marois, Premier of Quebec
Brad Wall, Premier of Saskatchewan
Darrell Pasloski, Premier of Yukon Territory
Municipalities in Provinces of New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, Ontario and Quebec