

April 17, 2020

Honourable Selina Robinson  
Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing  
Room 310, Parliament Buildings  
Victoria, BC V8V 1X4

Minister Robinson,

I am writing to you on behalf of the more than 170,000 members of the British Columbia Federation of Students. We are a provincial students' organization which represents students at 15 post-secondary institutions in all regions of the province.

Students in BC were excited to hear the announcement of the government's Temporary Rental Supplement program last month; however, the implementation of the program has proven to be inaccessible to many young people across the province.

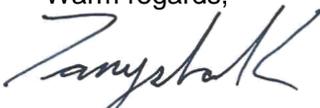
As you are aware, many of the province's relief supports require the use of the federal government's programs as eligibility criteria. For example, people looking to receive the provincial government's one-time emergency funding of \$1,000 must be approved for the Canada Emergency Response Benefit (CERB). Although the federal government has extended the eligibility requirements for these programs, there are still many people – students, for example – who are falling through the cracks. We are advocating with the federal government to change CERB eligibility criteria in order to close gaps in recipients; however, in the meantime we are hopeful that the provincial government will do what it can to help those still struggling.

Many students work hard in the summer to save enough money to not work during the school year in order to focus on their academic success. We are now at the time of year when they would be looking for co-op placements or summer jobs – yet these opportunities have all but completely dried up. Yet with no prospect for income, these students can't demonstrate a loss of income due to COVID-19, and are therefore ineligible for the CERB and for other programs such as your government's Temporary Rental Supplement. There are also a variety of other individual situations that have made many students ineligible for CERB and/or EI such as graduate students who have been getting by on their graduate scholarships, for example.

For these reasons, we are asking you to relax the eligibility criteria for the Temporary Rental Supplement program and move towards a more universal system which would not require applicants to prove their loss of income or CERB eligibility. Doing so would open this program up to many people who are struggling to make ends meet as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Thank you for your time and attention to this matter.

Warm regards,



Tanysa Klassen  
Chairperson

CC: Premier John Horgan