



Hon. Doug Ford
Premier's Office
Room 281
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Hon. Raymond Sung Joon Cho
Ministry for Seniors and Accessibility
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Dear Premier Ford and Minister Cho:

I am following up the meeting with the Minister, his staff, and Ms. Vassos from the Premier's Office that took place on November 7, regarding the closure of Davenhill Senior Living retirement home. On this day I welcomed my constituents and Davenhill residents Anne Washington and Betty Robinson, along with their daughters, Catherine Nasmith and Dianne Robinson, to Queen's Park to address this important issue.

I want to thank the Minister and his staff, along with Ms. Vassos, for taking the time to meet. While I appreciate the effort on behalf of the Minister, immediate action must now be taken to address the serious issues related to the closure of Davenhill.

There are currently two senior residents – 97 year-old Betty Robinson is one of them – who are living at Davenhill. This is their right, as Davenhill has not issued a formal eviction notice to any of the residents. Yet Davenhill is trying to force these seniors to leave by closing floors, demanding they leave daily, cancelling meal programs, and even selling the furniture out from under them. This is harassing behavior and completely unacceptable.

With this situation in mind, I am reiterating my request from earlier this year to undertake an immediate review of the *Retirement Homes Act*, including how it interacts with the *Residential Tenancies Act*, in response abrupt closures of retirement homes. Private retirement homes should not be able to force residents out without a formal eviction process by suddenly cutting off the vital services that these seniors rely upon and pay for. While the Minister initially declined to pursue a review, I hope last week's events and dialogue have changed his mind.

The ability for seniors to have access to secure housing and services is jeopardized by provisions in the *Retirement Homes Act* that permit a retirement home to remove and/or dramatically increase the cost of critical services, such as meals and nursing, well above the level of cost recovery. This means seniors could be forced to leave their homes simply because they can't afford the new fees for services they require. Seniors deserve better protections from eviction than this.

I also urge you to review the provisions in the *Residential Tenancies Act* that relate specifically to Care Homes (including retirement homes). Under Section 146, residents are not entitled to receive any compensation from a home operator if they accept an alternate offer of accommodation. What this means is that a home can force vulnerable seniors to move, intimidate them into accepting the first offer of accommodation (even if it is more expensive or less desirable), and not be required to compensate them for any costs, including moving expenses.

This is what happened at Davenhill, where residents were not even informed of their right to request compensation due to the sudden closure. Moreover, residents expressed to me that they do not believe Davenhill properly informed them of the timing and reason for closing their home, as required under legislation.

Attached here is a letter from two of the families deeply impacted by Davenhill's closure I support Ms. Nasmith and Ms. Robinson's call for an investigation into Davenhill's closure led by the Ministry, and urge to you address their concerns regarding the Retirement Homes Regulatory Authority immediately.

Over 150 seniors and their families have been affected by Davenhill's sudden closure. Vulnerable seniors should not be forced to leave their homes without compensation simply because a home closes and is sold for millions of dollars.

When our seniors and loved ones move into a retirement home, they deserve to feel safe and secure in their housing and care. I urge the Minister and the Premier to review the current regulation of retirement homes to address these issues and ensure seniors have the protections they deserve, and so that another situation like Davenhill does not occur again.

I look forward to your response.

Sincerely,



Jessica Bell, MPP
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c:

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