

September 28, 2009

**OPEN LETTER TO DR. RUBY DHALLA, MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT FOR
BRAMPTON-SPRINGDALE**

Dear Dr. Dhalla,

Thank you for your statement explaining the underlying purpose of your Bill C-428. We will post it and see if the explanation will satisfy CARP members and others who have been writing into us relying on a major misapprehension of the purpose and scale of your proposal. And we believe that this has created an emotional backlash that will have a negative impact on the very people you meant to help.

Consequently, CARP is calling on you to provide more comprehensive information about the impact of Bill C-428. Your bill has the laudable aim of mitigating poverty amongst immigrant seniors by reducing the residency requirements for Old Age Security benefits [OAS] from ten to three years. However there is a lack of clarity about the number of people who would stand to benefit from such a legislative change. According to the 2006 census, seniors account for (just) 3.4% of recent immigrants and 87% of immigrant seniors in Canada immigrated before 1991 (and would therefore be unaffected by Bill C-428.) Moreover, a significant proportion of recent immigrant seniors may already be eligible for OAS Benefits after one year of residency due to the Social Security Agreements that are in force between Canada and 49 other countries. In light of these facts, CARP urges you to provide more detailed information about the proportion of the senior population to whom a reduction in the OAS residency requirements would apply.

Similarly, CARP believes that further information is required about the amount of benefits that newcomer seniors would receive if the OAS residency requirement is reduced from ten to three years. While you have explained that under Bill C-428, a three year resident would receive \$38.77 in Old Age Security Benefits, there is a lack of information about the GIS entitlements that would accompany this OAS benefit and CARP is calling on you to provide these details since one of the issues cited by our members is the overall cost of your initiative.

CARP is fully committed to eradicating poverty amongst seniors and will continue to support substantive legislative measures that will move us toward this goal in a fair and equitable manner. We look forward to receiving further information about the economic and social implications of Bill C-428.

Sincerely,

Susan Eng
Vice President, Advocacy