

Date:

MP

Dear Honorable _____,

I am writing because I live in your riding and would be very thankful to have the opportunity to meet with you to speak to you about autism. As a resident of _____ and an active member of the autism community, I have been involved in advocating for a National Autism Strategy for Canada through the Canadian Autism Spectrum Disorder Alliance (CASDA).

Autistic Canadians and their families, including those that live in our riding, face untenable barriers to experiencing the kind of Canadian life to which we all aspire. They experience long waitlists for services here in _____ and across the country, lack of access to specialized services, lack of accessible housing and significant barriers to gaining employment as the identification of autism across Canada continues to rise.

I share many of the same experiences as other provinces. I believe, through a coherent National Autism Strategy led by the federal government, that we can make a difference for Canadians on the autism spectrum. We have a lot to learn from each other and can do better for our great country.

Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) is the most common and fastest-growing neurodevelopmental disorder in Canada, affecting **1 in 66** Canadians aged 5-17 and an estimated **500,000** people nationwide and their families. Without appropriate supports that fit their needs, autistic Canadians and their families see drastically worse health, education, employment and quality of life outcomes.

These effects ripple throughout their communities. Autism is not just a provincial responsibility or a federal responsibility. It is a Canadian responsibility. That's why CASDA is calling for federal leadership on a National Autism Strategy. Our vision: to make sure all Canadians with autism and their families have full and equitable access to the resources they need across their lifespan where and when they need them.

As a citizen in your riding, I also enthusiastically endorse CASDA's advocacy to ensure our federal political parties commit to adopting a National Autism Strategy and include this commitment within their campaign platforms for the upcoming federal election. CASDA has

developed a Blueprint for a National Autism Strategy which provides an overview of a shared vision, collectively agreed upon principals, and 3 key areas of investment: federal leadership, federal action, and a cross governmental approach to autism. It serves as a much-needed starting point for collaboration and partnership that will lead to the further development and adoption of a National Autism Strategy. The Blueprint provides a foundation for working with all levels of government and a diverse set of stakeholders, including autistic Canadians. The Blueprint provides a vehicle to activate our shared commitment to improving the lives of autistic Canadians and their families.

I would like to meet you to speak about the policy paper that has been written outlining a Blueprint for a National Autism Strategy. As I am in your riding, I would be keen to visit you and share our vision for a better Canada. We need your leadership and suggest that the party adopt the Blueprint as an election strategy and believe that your party can do more to help our community.

I'm attaching a link to CASDA's Blueprint and Visual:

<https://www.casda.ca/wp-content/uploads/2019/03/Blueprint-for-a-National-ASD-Strategy-1.pdf>

I look forward to hearing from you.

Best regards,