

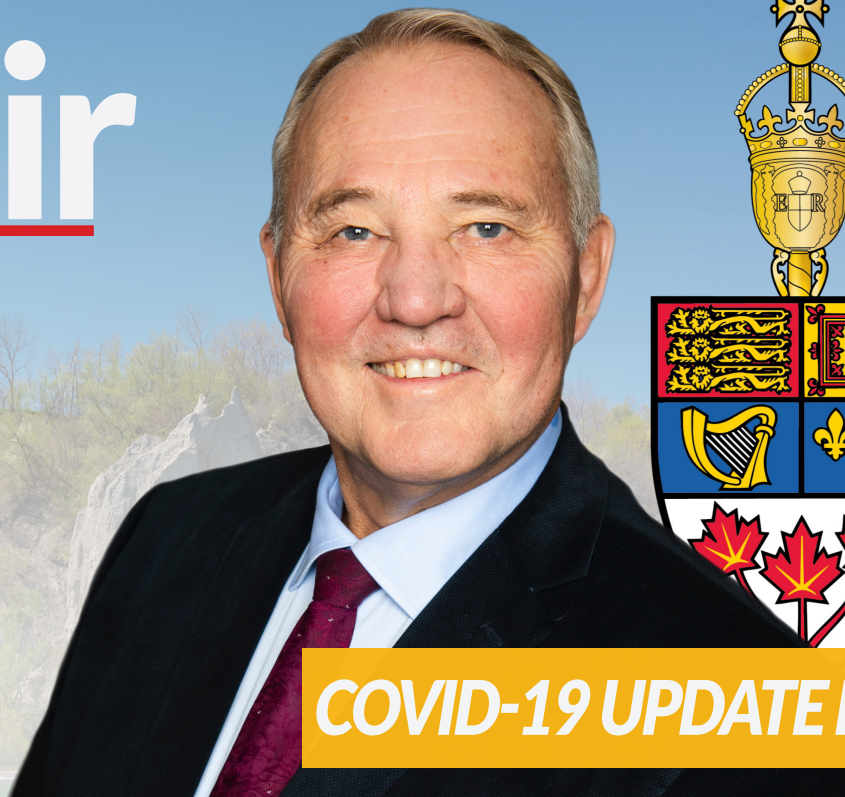
Bill Blair

**MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT FOR
SCARBOROUGH SOUTHWEST**

GET IN TOUCH

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COVID-19 UPDATE INSIDE

Dear Friends,

I hope this letter finds you well during what I know is a difficult time for all of us in Scarborough Southwest. The spread of COVID-19 presents a serious threat to the health and well-being of communities across the country. For many of us these are difficult and uncertain times, and it may be some time before we put this pandemic behind us—but we will get through this, *together*.

Our government is working tirelessly to address the impact of the COVID-19 outbreak here in Canada. This crisis has had an unprecedented impact on our health, on our society, and on our economy. Over the past months, our government has introduced relief measures for individuals, businesses, and families, while engaging partners in the private sector and our international allies to ensure that we have the resources necessary to fight this disease. The measures our government has taken will help keep our community safe, healthy, and ready to recover once we're through this. As we move forward, we will continue to base our whole-of-government response on the advice of scientists and public health officials.

The federal government is not alone in taking action to protect and support our community in Scarborough Southwest from the worst impacts of the pandemic. Throughout this period, I will continue to work closely with Councillor Gary Crawford and MPP Doly Begum to ensure you and your loved ones have the support you need. Cooperation between all levels of government will continue to be important as this outbreak progresses, and I look forward to continuing to work with all partners to keep people safe.

Many in our community have taken the selfless initiative to help their neighbours over the past weeks and months. First, I would like to acknowledge the around-the-clock work of our frontline healthcare workers here in Scarborough. Your work on the front-lines will save lives during this pandemic. While you are working to protect Canadians, our government is working to ensure you have the support and necessary

equipment to keep yourselves safe. On behalf of the community in Scarborough Southwest—Thank You.

Second, I would like to thank the individuals and organizations who have stepped up to help others. Whether it's the Scarborough Food Security Initiative delivering food and supplies, Rod and Joe's No Frill's offering exclusive hours for seniors and those with disabilities, or restaurants offering free delivery throughout the community, people in Scarborough Southwest are doing their part.

As we move forward, I would ask you to listen to the advice of public health officials. Stay at home as much as possible, wash your hands, and maintain a safe distance from others while in public. The actions we all take today will help curb the spread of COVID-19 and ultimately save lives. As this situation continues to evolve, please note that the information included in this letter may not be completely up-to-date when it hits your doorstep. Please make sure to check my social media pages, as well government COVID-19 response websites for current and accurate information.

Should you have any questions about the federal response to COVID-19 or how you can help, please don't hesitate to contact my constituency office. Together, we will get through this—as a community, and as a country.

Thank you all for doing your part for our community.
Sincerely,

Bill Blair
Member of Parliament
Scarborough Southwest

COVID-19 RELIEF In Scarborough Southwest

The CERB Made Simple

Nobody should have to worry about whether they will be able to pay their bills or afford groceries during these difficult times. That is why our government introduced the Canada Emergency Response Benefit (CERB), which offers immediate financial relief to Canadians who have been affected by the outbreak of COVID-19.

The CERB provides individuals who have lost work with \$500/week, for up to four months. Since applications opened in early April, more than 7 million Canadians have applied to receive the benefit. If you, or someone in your household has lost income due to the outbreak of COVID-19, you may be eligible to receive CERB payments. Now more than ever Canadians should be focused on their health, not worrying about making ends meet.

Have you?

1. Check If You Are Eligible

- Lost employment income for at least 14 consecutive days in a four-week period due to the outbreak of COVID-19?
- Earned at least \$5,000 in 2019 or in the past 12 months from employment or self-employment income.
- Earned \$1000 or less a month, are seasonal workers, part-time wage earners and people coming off of EI.
- Temporarily stopped working, lost a job, are sick or in quarantine, or need to care for a child or a family member.

2. Apply Now

The online portal for accessing the CERB is **now open**. Depending on which conditions you meet, you will either apply through Service Canada or the Canada Revenue Agency. Visit canada.ca/coronavirus to get started. You can also call the toll free number, 1 (800) 959-2019, to apply.

3. Wait 3 Days

After applying for the CERB, Canadians will receive their first payment within 3 days via direct deposit or 10 days through the mail. The benefit will be paid to individuals affected by the outbreak between March 15 and October 3 in four week increments. You will need to apply and confirm your eligibility for CERB every 4 weeks (to a maximum of 16 weeks) if your situation continues. The CERB is a taxable benefit.

\$150 000 FOR SENIORS' SERVICES IN Scarborough Southwest

Our government is taking important steps to ensure we protect Seniors across the country. The Minister of Seniors, Deb Schulte, has announced \$9 million in funding from the New Horizons for Seniors Program to the United Way. The New Horizons for Seniors Program is a federal grant program that supports projects led or inspired by seniors who make a difference in the lives of others and their communities.

In the month of March, seven organizations in Scarborough Southwest received more than **\$150 000** in funding for a wide range of programs and activities to improve the lives of seniors in our community. This funding from the New Horizons for Seniors Program will help the United Way set up services such as health check-ins and grocery delivery for seniors.

Our government has also reduced the minimum withdrawal requirement for Registered Retirement Income Funds by 25% for 2020, and announced a one-time payment of \$300 to OAS recipients and \$200 to GIS recipients. This will offer seniors greater access to the money they need, without putting them in financial jeopardy.

SUPPORT FOR STUDENTS, RECENT GRADS & YOUTH

Many young Canadians are facing an unprecedented challenge in the fight against COVID-19, and our Government has their back. With the new **Canada Emergency Student Benefit** we're providing support for students and recent graduates not eligible for the CERB. This benefit provides \$1250/month for eligible students from May until August.

In addition to the CESB, our government is proposing significant measures to meet the financial needs of current students. New tuition support programs have been put in place to ensure that post-secondary students are able to continue their studies in the fall, and the **Canada Student Service Grant** will provide up to \$5000 to help young students gain valuable work experience in national service positions and pay their tuition this fall.

**\$1250/MONTH
FOR STUDENTS &
RECENT GRADS**

Finally, many young people are dependent on money they earn in the summer months, and small businesses often rely on their labour. Our government has earmarked \$263 million for the **Canada Summer Jobs** program, which will help small businesses hire the workers they need to operate. The will help create more jobs for young Canadians between 15 and 30 years of age.

Helping BUSINESSES OF ALL SIZES

The COVID-19 pandemic has had an unprecedented effect on the economy, particularly the businesses in our community who have had to close their doors. When the crisis hit, the federal government took immediate action to support businesses and their employees through this challenging time.

In March, the government introduced a 75% wage subsidy to help businesses who have lost revenue because of COVID-19. This is allowing businesses and non-profits to keep their employees on payroll despite having lost revenue due to COVID-19. The Prime Minister also announced the new Canada Emergency Business Account to help provide interest-free loans worth up to \$40 000 to small businesses and not-for-profits, and deferred GST/HST payments and customs duties until the end of June. Together this represents \$65 billion in direct support for Canadian businesses, and \$30 billion in additional tax deferrals.

In addition to these measures, our government has proposed a rent assistance program in cooperation with the province of Ontario. Our goal is to provide direct support to local businesses struggling to pay rent and reduce the overall cost of rent. For future updates to this program, follow my social media pages, download the *Canada Business App*, or visit <https://www.canada.ca/en/departement-finance/economic-response-plan.html>.



**75%
WAGE SUBSIDY
FOR 3 MONTHS**

During these difficult times, taking care of your mental health is more important than ever. If you or your loved ones are feeling stressed or anxious, know that you are not alone. There are a number of resources available in our community to help you manage your mental health.

Wellness Together Canada is a new mental health and substance abuse portal for all Canadians. Visit their website (<https://ca.portal.gs>) for free information, services, and counselling if you are experiencing difficulty.

If you or your child is in crisis, counsellors at **Kids Help Phone** are only a call (1 (800) 668-6868) or a text (686 868) away.

Finally, **Youthlink**, our local youth services organization, has moved its walk-up counselling services online during the outbreak. Call (416) 967-1773 ext. 222 to book a session with a trained counsellor. No matter what difficulties you may be facing, somebody will be there to listen to you and offer support.

Mental Health Matters



Federal Support for

Community Services in Scarborough

The pandemic is taking a toll on our community and it has hit vulnerable individuals especially hard. Now more than ever, Canadians are dependent on the essential services delivered by charities and non-profit organizations. Declining revenues combined with an increased demand for their services has put an strain on these organizations' ability to deliver.

To help these organizations serve communities in need, our government made \$350 million available to them through the **Emergency Community Support Fund**. The ECSF will provide funding through national organizations like the United Way to get money into the hands of community organizations as quickly as possible. This will enable organizations in our community to offer greater access to services such as home deliveries for seniors, driving people with disabilities to appointments, and training volunteers.

Most importantly, Canadians dealing with the social, economic, and health impacts of the COVID-19 outbreak shouldn't have to worry about where they will get their next

meal. That is why our government has invested \$100 million in projects that improve food security in communities across the country.

Over the past several weeks, many individuals have stepped up and started or expanded initiatives to ensure no one is going hungry here in Scarborough. The Scarborough Food Security Initiative serves meals to over 900 families in our community. Last month, they received \$20 000 from the federal government to expand their operation and reach even more households in Scarborough.

The SFSI is not alone; every Tuesday and Friday, Access Alliance provides free takeout meals for people in need at their location at 3079 Danforth Avenue. Another group of volunteers from the local Sunnata Jamaat Mosque is providing over 500 meals to the homeless and vulnerable in the community. These acts of volunteerism are truly inspiring. If you would like more information on how to get involved or where to make a donation, please visit @williamsterlingblair on Facebook or Instagram.



"The prohibition of firearms makes our society safer and helps to ensure the well-being of all, especially certain young Canadians who are too often faced with racial discrimination... The gun ban works to reduce instances of hate crimes and also can have a strong impact on the relationship between mental health and violence. The goal is the construction of a harmonious and inclusive society where each Canadian can live in peace"

—Amikley Fontaine, President & CEO
Sylvénie Lindor Foundation

Taking Action Against Gun Violence

On May 1st, 2020, Prime Minister Justin Trudeau and I announced our government's immediate ban of over 1,500 models and variants of assault-style firearms in Canada. These newly banned firearms cannot be legally used, sold or imported in our country.

Canadians deserve to live in a country where they feel safe and secure from gun violence. Sadly, gun violence is not a new thing in our society – and it's made all the more deadly with the proliferation of firearms that are more powerful than ever before. For decades, chiefs of police, advocacy groups, grieving families and every day Canadians have been calling

for a ban on these types of firearms – guns that were designed for the battlefield, and not for our streets. We've heard their concerns, and we've taken action.

The strong measures we announced earlier this month will help keep Canadians safe, and immediately begin to lower the number of these assault-style guns in our country. We know there is more to do, but this ban is one very important piece of the larger puzzle in reducing gun-related crime in Canada.

Canada can know a future with less gun violence and less tragedy. By taking action, we are giving our kids and grandkids a better chance at a safer future.