



THE
CANADIAN VETERANS ADVOCACY

one veteran, one standard

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**The Canadian Veterans Advocacy implores the Harper Government
to exempt Veterans Affairs Canada's budget before the
Federal Budget release on March 29, 2012**

NIAGARA FALLS, Ontario, March 1, 2012 – Many of Canada's veterans' stakeholders, including the Canadian Veterans Advocacy, have requested the Harper Government to exclude Veterans Affairs Canada (VAC) from looming budget cuts.

"Our message is simple – now is not the time for budget cuts at Veterans Affairs Canada," said Michael Blais, president and founder of the Canadian Veterans Advocacy. "How can the Harper Government, in good conscience, cut the VAC budget by half a billion dollars when the department is clearly having great difficulty providing the standard of care and compensation our wounded warriors deserve?"

The recent scathing reports on VAC by the Veterans' Ombudsman, Guy Parent, highlight the myriad problems with the system and suggest budget cuts will not improve matters but make them worse. During the past several weeks, members of the Union of Veterans Affairs Canada Employees have also come forward to speak out about overburdened staff, excessive case loads and an inability to adequately provide services and benefits to veterans in an expedient manner, informing Canadians that some veterans are dying before gaining access to the benefits and services to which they were entitled.

"This Government has a sacred obligation to Canada's war wounded veterans and right now they are not fulfilling their duty! This is why the Canadian Veterans Advocacy is encouraging all Canadians to contact their local MP and tell them to fight to have VAC's budget excluded from the austerity programs," said Mr. Blais. "We cannot allow the government of Canada to abandon their sacred duty to the wounded. Now is the time for all Canadians to rally behind our troops!"

The Canadian Veterans Advocacy is organizing a peaceful vigil on Parliament Hill to coincide with the reading of the Federal Budget on March 29, 2012. The "Vigil for Veterans" will start at 11:00 am when Canadian veterans, their families and concerned citizens will congregate at the National War Memorial. Fifteen minutes prior to the budget, the vigil will move to Parliament Hill, where veterans will stand fast, reminding Parliamentarians and the Canadian public of the human aspect of military service and the hardships all veterans will suffer as a consequence of these half billion dollar cuts.

"Time is of the essence," Blais firmly announced. "We have less than a month to motivate and organize the nation behind our wounded warriors, disabled military, RCMP, and police service veterans. Contact your Member of Parliament. Contact Prime Minister Harper. Tell them no, it is not

acceptable to you that our Government even consider paying-down the national debt on the backs of our wounded warriors. When budget day arrives, join with us on Parliament Hill and stand up in support of those who have served this country.”

About The Canadian Veterans Advocacy

The Canadian Veterans Advocacy is a federally registered not-for-profit organization focused on improving the quality of life for Canadian Veterans. The organization was founded in 2010 by Michael L. Blais, CD. Mike, along with other military, RCMP and police services veterans united in the first annual Canadian Veterans National Day of Protest in 2010, and held a repeat protest in 2011 after the Government failed to make substantive changes to the New Veterans Charter. Of primary importance was – and is – the restoration of the *life time* Social Covenant between Canada’s sons and daughters and the Nation they serve, a sacred trust abandoned in 2006 with the implementation of the New Veterans Charter.

INFORMATION

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