

January 31, 2014

The Right Honourable Stephen Harper
Prime Minister of Canada
Office of the Prime Minister
80 Wellington Street
Ottawa, ON K1A 0A2

Dear Prime Minister Harper:

I am writing to voice the opposition of the Canadian Union of Public Employees to the closure of Veterans Affairs Canada offices across the country, and the highly inappropriate conduct of your Minister of Veterans Affairs in dealing with this matter and his treatment of veterans.

All Canadians owe a great debt to our veterans; one that cannot truly be repaid in full. We can, however, ensure that the services they depend on every day are available in their community, and are delivered by qualified and experienced workers trained to serve the unique needs of veterans.

Veterans have been clear on what they want. They believe transferring veteran services to Service Canada offices will not adequately fulfill their needs. They believe nine veteran affairs staff cannot possibly deliver the same level of service as the 90 who have staffed VAC offices – who were already overworked and under-resourced.

We owe our veterans no less than to listen and act on these concerns. Yet the Minister of Veterans Affairs, the Hon. Julian Fantino, has been disrespectful to veterans who simply want to have their voices heard. His lack of empathy for veterans is disturbing, and his conduct is unbecoming for a Minister representing the Crown.

On behalf of the over 627,000 members of CUPE, many of whom are veterans themselves, I urge you to reverse the closure of VAC offices, and appoint a Veterans Affairs Ministers who will put the needs of veterans above all else and show them due respect.

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When called to serve, our veterans answered. We cannot turn our backs when they need us most.

Yours truly,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Paul Moist." The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

PAUL MOIST
National President

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c.c: Thomas Mulcair, leader of the official opposition;
Justin Trudeau, leader of the Liberal Party of Canada;
Elizabeth May, leader of the Green Party;
André Bellavance, interim leader of the Bloc Québécois;
Robyn Benson, National President of the Public Service Alliance of Canada;
National Executive Board Members.