

# FSAC ADVOCACY CORNER



## Government Relations Report

September 2024

### FSAC President Jeff Weafer Meets with New Minister of Labour and Seniors Team

Following MP Seamus O'Regan's resignation from cabinet that left his portfolio as Minister of Labour and Seniors empty, Prime Minister Justin Trudeau appointed Minister Steven MacKinnon as the new Minister of Labour and Seniors. Shortly after his appointment, Jeff Weafer met with his team to introduce FSAC to the Minister's team and discuss the issues facing death care professionals and how the government can better support grieving Canadians.

The discussion covered FSAC's main asks including removing the GST from funeral services and that the government restore the 1998 CPP Death Benefit to its original level of \$3,580 and tie it to inflation. Steven MacKinnon's team was very receptive to these asks and assured that the Minister would receive a full briefing on the discussion.

### FSAC President Jeff Weafer Meets with MP Michael Couteau

On August 26, FSAC President Jeff Weafer, with Executive Director, Pam Moss, met with MP Michael Couteau to discuss his Private Members Bill, C-397, An Act to amend the Excise Tax Act and the Department of Employment and Social Development Act.

FSAC thanked MP Couteau for introducing this bill to remove the GST on funeral services and his continued advocacy on this issue. Discussion focused on how FSAC and MP Couteau can work together to ensure messaging is consistent and to enhance our advocacy tools to ensure the message is spread to both the public and parliamentarians on the importance of C-397 as well as the profound impact removing GST from funeral services will have on the lives of many Canadian families. Providing tax relief to make these services more affordable demonstrates a compassionate approach to taxation policy, offering support to Canadians during their most vulnerable moments.

### More Info on Bill C-397

On June 12, MP Michael Couteau, the Liberal member for Don Valley East introduced C-397, An Act to amend the Excise Tax Act and the Department of Employment and Social Development Act. This bill amends the Excise Tax Act to eliminate the GST/HST on funeral services. It also amends the Department of Employment and Social Development Act to provide for the establishment of a one-stop service that would allow for the reporting of a death to the Minister of Employment and Social Development and the subsequent communication of relevant information to partner entities.

## FSAC in the Media

The FSAC Board continues to be leading the charge on ensuring the voice of deathcare professionals continues to be part of the national conversation when it comes to low-income Canadians being impacted by the cost-of-living crisis. FSAC's media engagement over the span of two months has resulted in the following results:

- [Canadian Funeral Directors Warn of Unauthorized Obits](#) (Canadian Press, August 04, 2024)
- [Funeral Association President Says more Support Needed to help Families](#) (CBC News, August 03, 2024)

With continued media engagement, FSAC will continue to highlight the positive community impact funeral service providers have on their communities.

## The House of Commons and Senate Begin the Fall Sitting

On September 16, the House of Commons and Senate of Canada resumed sitting to start the fall session. The House of Commons will return on September 16 and the Senate on September 17. As MPs returned to Ottawa, we have already seen changes in the Canadian political environment. See below for some highlights of the fall sitting session so far:

### · **Non-Confidence Motion**

- o On September 24, Pierre Poilievre tabled a non-confidence motion in the House of Commons. Both the Bloc Quebecois and the NDP voted against the motion keeping the Liberal government in power.

### · **Dissolution of the Supply and Confidence Deal Between the Liberals and NDP**

- o Jagmeet Singh, Leader of the NDP abruptly ended the supply and confidence deal with the Liberals, the deal that has kept the Liberals safely in power during the current minority government.

### · **Growing Liberal Caucus Dissent**

- o An increasing number of Liberal caucus members have spoken out publicly about the unpopularity of Prime Minister Justin Trudeau and the need for new leadership.

### · **Key Ministerial Departures**

- o MP Seamus O'Regan resigned from cabinet as Minister of Labour and Seniors citing family reasons for the decision.
- o MP Pablo Rodriguez resigned from cabinet as Minister of Transport and departed Liberal caucus to sit as an independent as he prepared to run for the Quebec Liberal leadership.

### · **September 16 By Elections**

- o The Bloc Quebecois saw an unlikely win in Montreal area by election, what has been a safe Liberal seat for decades.
- o The NDP narrowly held on to their Elmwood-Transcona seat in Manitoba as the Conservatives surged in the polls.