



Feb 13, 2018

Federal Accessibility Legislation

Call to Action

The Government of Canada is preparing to table national accessibility legislation to promote equality of opportunity, inclusion and participation for Canadians who have disabilities. This law is needed because Canadians with disabilities face ongoing, persistent and daily barriers to goods, services and opportunities in their lives. A national accessibility law could obligate businesses, services and organizations to make their goods, services and opportunities accessible for people with disabilities.

Communication Disabilities Access Canada is one of eight non-profit, disability organizations that have been selected to provide input to the federal government on what should be included in this legislation. Working together with people who have communication disabilities, family members, speech-language pathologists and augmentative communication clinicians, we have submitted a [report to the government](#) that you can read.

Some of our recommendations include:

- People should have increased access to clinical communication services and funding for communication devices
- Service providers should be trained in how to interact with people who have communication disabilities in person, over the telephone and via social media
- Service providers should provide accessible information and forms
- Communication assistants should be available to facilitate communication, if and when required

We have been told that the bill could be tabled anytime from mid-March to June 2018 or it could be later. We will not see the content of the bill until it has been introduced to Parliament.

At this time, we all need to start planning to support the bill and ensure that it meaningfully includes the accessibility needs of people who have communication disabilities.

Throughout this process, we will be asking you to encourage the people you support who have communication disabilities, their family members and advocates to connect with their MPs to make this law a reality.

The process

A bill goes through several stages to become law. Throughout this process, we will keep you informed using our social media and by providing updates to your professional association.

Here are some suggestions on ways we can work together to ensure this bill is passed.

- 1. Before the bill is introduced:** MPs should know that this bill is coming and is important to their constituents.

Timeline: Immediate. There will not be a lot of notice before the bill is tabled.

What CDAC will do: Provide a sample message to send to your MP (See attached).

What you can do: Ask as many people as possible to write to their MP to tell them that they are interested in this bill and to encourage them to support it when tabled.

- 2. First reading:** The bill is considered read for the first time and is printed.

Timeline: To be determined

What CDAC will do: Share the contents of the bill via Social media.

What you can do: Ask as many people as possible to write to their MP requesting that they support the bill and explain why it is important to them

- 3. Second Reading:** Members debate the bill's principle.

Timeline: To be determined

What CDAC will do: Set up an online survey for people to provide input.

What you can do: Read and discuss the bill with your clients and their family members. Tell us what you like in the bill and how it could be improved for people with communication disabilities.

- 4. Committee Stage:** Committee members study the bill clause by clause. This will likely be the Standing Committee on Human Resources, Skills and Social Development and the Status of Persons with Disabilities. They will hold hearings to gather information. The committee can propose amendments, or changes, to the bill.

Timeline: To be determined

What CDAC will do: CDAC will submit input from its survey to the members of the Standing Committee on Human Resources, Skills and Social Development and the Status of Persons with Disabilities. CDAC will also provide guidelines and support to people who want to present at the hearings.

- What you can do: Apply and/or support a person to present at the hearings.
5. **Third Reading:** Members debate and vote on the bill.
- Timeline: To be determined
- What we can all do: Write to our MPs and Senators to ask them to support the bill and explain why it is important
6. **Senate:** The bill follows a similar process.
- Timeline: To be determined
- What you can do: Apply and / or support a person to present at the hearings.
7. **Royal Assent:** The bill receives Royal Assent after being passed by both Houses.

Immediate Action

Ask as many people as possible to contact their MPs to ask them to support the bill when it is tabled and explain why it is important (See attached sample)

To locate your MP: enter your postal code in box labeled "[Find a Member of Parliament](#)"

Please contact us if you have any questions or suggestions on how we can work together to ensure communication accessibility is included appropriately and comprehensively in the upcoming Federal legislation. We will update you as the process unfolds, and let you know how to help at each step of the way.

Thank you.



Barbara Collier Reg CASLPO, F. ISAAC
Executive Director
Barbara.collier@rogers.com

cc. Elyse Shumway, Consultant, CDAC at elyseshumway@gmail.com

[Facebook](#)

[Twitter](#)

131 Barber Greene Road, Toronto, Ontario, Canada M3C 3Y5 Telephone: 416.444.9532 Email: admin@cdacanada.com
Information: www.cdacanada.com

CDAC is a Registered Charity 87160 1712 RR0001