

CANADA DISABILITY BENEFIT (CDB)

CLAWBACK TALKING POINTS

Explaining the issue to a decision-maker

We have provided a loose outline with key points that you can use at your meetings. In addition, we suggest that you personalize your approach and consider mentioning your family's story and the positive impact the CDB could have on your lives.

- Thank you for taking the time to meet with us today. We are here to ask that the Government of Alberta do its part to support people with disabilities by changing AISH and Income Support regulations so that the entire value of the new Canada Disability Benefit reaches its intended recipients.
- As you may know, people with disabilities experience disproportionately high rates of poverty, and AISH is far from adequate.
- The federal government has recently introduced a new Canada Disability Benefit (CDB). The benefit is intended to help address the poverty faced by many people with disabilities and serves to increase their financial security.
- Due to the Government of Alberta's decision to claw back the Canada Disability Benefit, CDB recipients who also receive AISH or Income Support will experience a dollar-for-dollar reduction in their provincial benefits.
- All other provinces and territories have agreed not to claw back the Canada Disability Benefit.

If you are told that AISH is the highest income benefit program of any province or territory in Canada, and that it's time for the federal government to bear some of this cost, you can respond with:

- The failure of other provinces is no excuse for depriving adults with disabilities a benefit that would alleviate the poverty they continue to experience while they rely on AISH.
- MLAs were aware of the increased cost-of-living when they voted in 2024 for a \$270 increase in their own housing allowance which will now be \$2,200/month, which is higher than the total someone on AISH must live

on. Now the government is depriving adults with disabilities of a smaller increase, an unjust and harsh claw back against some of the most vulnerable Albertans.

If you are told that the clawback was necessary so that CDB would not be taxed, you can respond with:

- Neither CDB nor AISH are taxable, though they are reported on income tax returns.

If you are told that AISH is overextended and clawing back CDB will enable the Government of Alberta to support more people on AISH, you can respond that:

- AISH is a statutory entitlement which means that the government will always pay monthly AISH benefits regardless of whether the government is running a deficit or whether more people qualify for AISH than previously. The Government of Alberta has sufficient fiscal capacity to meet this statutory obligation for all Albertans who qualify for AISH without finding savings within AISH by clawing back other benefits.

If you are told that the federal government set a goal that the combined amount of CDB and provincial or territorial income supports for persons with disabilities would reach \$1,811, to equal the support provided through Old Age Security and the Guaranteed Income Supplement, you can respond that:

- The federal government recommended the combined amount of OAS and GIS which is \$1,811, as a minimum target to be met for income support, which is inadequate to lift people out of poverty. This was a minimum, not a ceiling, and AISH remains below the poverty line. To suggest the amount of AISH alone is adequate is out of touch with the realities of people with disabilities and their families.
- Your government can improve the lives of people with disabilities at no cost by simply exempting the Canada Disability Benefit from the calculations for AISH and Income Support. This can be done by adding one line to the AISH and Income Support regulations.