



HOUSE OF COMMONS
CHAMBRE DES COMMUNES
CANADA

Lindsay Mathysen

Member of Parliament
London-Fanshawe

May 11, 2023

The Honourable Chrystia Freeland, P.C., M.P.
Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance
House of Commons
Ottawa, ON K1A 0A6

Re: Support for Bill C-218

Dear Minister Freeland,

I am sure you are aware that I brought forward, Bill C-218, "*An Act to Amend the Excise Tax*" (*psychotherapy services*), which would exempt psychotherapy services from the goods and services tax.

In support of this issue, I brought forward a petition (E-4126), in March 2023. This petition was signed by 14,246 people who want the federal tax to be removed from psychotherapy and mental health counselling services.

The response given by your department was extremely disappointing. In the response, the Department of Finance stated, "It is also the government's understanding that psychotherapy and counselling therapy involve different services, and neither is regulated in at least five provinces or territories."

I would like to know how your department came to the conclusion that psychotherapy and counselling therapy involves different services?

The Labour Mobility provisions of the Canadian Free Trade Agreement, refers to the ability of certified workers to practice their regulated occupation, throughout Canada, wherever opportunities to work in that occupation exist.

The College of Registered Psychotherapists of Ontario recognizes registrants of the four other provincial colleges, Quebec and the Maritime provinces, as eligible for registration in Ontario, the same holds true for the other regulatory colleges as well.

The college acknowledges that if you are registered with one of the regulatory colleges in any of these provinces, then you can be registered in another province.

The Canadian Counselling and Psychotherapy Association states, "It is not possible to make a generally accepted distinction between counselling and psychotherapy. There are well-founded traditions, which use the terms, interchangeably and others which distinguish between them. If there are differences, they relate more to the individual psychotherapist or counsellors, training, and interests, and to the setting, in which they work rather than to any intrinsic difference in the two activities."

Additionally, the Government of Canada's national occupation classification system, which is used to identify and categorize jobs or occupations, based on training education, experience and responsibilities, lists one title for therapists in counselling and related specialized therapies.

It makes no distinction between counselling, therapists, and psychotherapists; when you search for either counselling, therapist, or psychotherapist, and it's the same classification system that is used by various branches of the federal government, including the CRA.

In a report, published by the Parliamentary Budget Officer on May 20, 2022, it was estimated that exempting psychotherapist and mental health counsellors from charging HST or GST would cost the federal government about \$15 million in the 2023/2024 fiscal year. This represents .0004% of the total estimated government budgetary revenues.

At a time when we need to provide as many supports as possible to address the mental health and addiction crisis in this country, this is a very small ask that could help to remove an unnecessary barrier to effective mental health care for Canadians.

You could easily eliminate an unfair discrimination against psychotherapists and mental health counsellors who are providing vital services to their communities.

I look forward to your response,

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Lindsay Mathysen".

Lindsay Mathysen
Member of Parliament
London-Fanshawe

CC: Daniel Farb