



# Neil Ellis

Member of Parliament for Bay of Quinte

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

June 5, 2019

## MP Ellis Tables Motion Calling for Federal Leadership to End Veteran Homelessness by 2025

***Motion M-225 is seconded by Conservative and New Democrat MPs and supported by national veteran and homelessness organizations.***

Ottawa, ON – The Member of Parliament for Bay of Quinte, Neil Ellis, is pleased to announce that he has tabled Private Members' motion, M-225, on ending veteran homelessness. M-225 will be brought forward to the House of Commons for debate on June 11, 2019.

M-225 states: *That, in the opinion of the House: (a) the government should set a goal to prevent and end Veteran homelessness in Canada by 2025; (b) a plan to achieve this aim should be developed by the government and be presented to the House by June 2020, led by the Minister of Families, Children and Social Development and supported by the Minister of Veterans Affairs; and (c) the plan in (b) should include consideration of whether a National Veterans Housing Benefit similar to the highly successful U.S. Housing and Urban Development – Veterans Administration Supportive Housing (HUD VASH) program would fit the Canadian context, complementing the National Housing Strategy.*

"Estimates indicate between 3,000 and 5,000 veterans are homeless in Canada," says Ellis. "This is a problem that *can* be solved. We have the resources and experienced partners on the ground ready, and eager to help. The Standing Committee on Veterans Affairs report on this issue shows that there is support for action across party lines. It's time for us all to get on with it."

The inspiration for M-225 came from witness testimonies brought forward to Members of the Standing Committee on Veterans Affairs including the **Canadian Alliance to End Homelessness (CAEH)**, **Veterans Emergency Transition Services (VETS Canada)**, the **Royal Canadian Legion** and **Old Brewery Mission** among others. On May 1, 2019, the House of Commons Standing Committee on Veterans Affairs released a unanimous report on ending homelessness for veterans.

MP Neil Ellis has been awaiting this opportunity since 2015 and enjoys the support of many honourable colleagues, including MPs Karen Vecchio and Sheri Benson, who have seconded M-225.

To stay current with M-225's progress, please feel refer to the following link:

[https://www.ourcommons.ca/Parliamentarians/en/members/Neil-R-Ellis\(88683\)/Work](https://www.ourcommons.ca/Parliamentarians/en/members/Neil-R-Ellis(88683)/Work).

The report of the Standing Committee on Veterans Affairs "Moving toward ending homelessness among veterans" is available at the following link: <https://www.ourcommons.ca/DocumentViewer/en/42-1/ACVA/report-12>.



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## Quotations:

“The observations shared with ACVA members on the statistical reality of homelessness among Canadian veterans stood out to me. At the end of the day, VAC can offer the very best training, education benefits, employment tools or resources possible, but—without a home—how can we expect our veterans and their families to access those services, or truly enjoy post-service life together? M-225 will help us make sure that essential foundation for personal wellbeing is firmly in place.”

- **Neil R. Ellis, Member of Parliament for Bay of Quinte**

“I’d like to thank Mr. Ellis for bringing this motion forward, and for his work chairing the Standing Committee on Veterans Affairs. One homeless veteran is too many. I am disappointed we didn’t get it done in this Parliament, but I fully support the implementation of this strategy.”

-**Sheri Benson Member of Parliament for Saskatoon West**

“Canadian veterans put their lives on the line, and made great sacrifices to serve our country. Veterans deserve the best possible services from their government in recognition of this service. Part of this duty should include support for our veterans facing homelessness, and working to remove barriers that keep them from accessing adequate housing.”

-**Karen Vecchio Member of Parliament for Elgin-Middlesex-London**

“Veteran homelessness is a solvable problem. The number of homeless veterans while unacceptable, is not overwhelming. We have strong veteran networks across the country, solid expertise in communities, federal infrastructure in place through the National Housing Strategy and proven models to follow. What’s been missing is federal leadership.”

- **Tim Richter, President & CEO of the Canadian Alliance to End Homelessness**

**Thomas D. Irvine**

“The Royal Canadian Legion fully supports this effort to end veteran homelessness in Canada, and would like to see a plan to end all homelessness,” says Dominion President Thomas D. Irvine. “We need a national coordinated strategy that will actually be “actioned.” For that, we need everyone on board - the federal government, provinces, municipalities, service providers and veterans’ organizations. All have a role to play to prevent and end homelessness in this country.”

-**Thomas D. Irvine, Dominion President, Royal Canadian Legion**



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“Through our Leave the Streets Behind Program, we have been supporting homeless veterans for many years,” says Dave Gordon, Legion Homeless Veterans Representative. “Government has spent countless dollars studying the issue, it’s now time to implement affordable housing, life skills training and dedicated support services if we truly want to bring an end to veteran homelessness.”

**-Dave Gordon, Royal Canadian Legion**

“In its third year of operation, Old Brewery Mission’s *Sentinels of the Street* program in Montreal has demonstrated both that homelessness among veterans is not a dead-end and that well considered partnerships between government and community organizations can bring an end to veterans homelessness , and do so within the next few years.”

**-Matthew Pearce, President & CEO Old Brewery Mission**

"As an organization that has been working "Boots on the Ground" from coast to coast for almost a decade to tackle the issue of Veteran's homelessness, we know this is a solvable problem. We are happy to see support from all parties to take action and we look forward to continuing to play our part to end Veteran's homelessness."

**-Jim Lowther and Debbie Lowther, VETS Canada**