

# Courtenay-Alberni MP urges Canada to negotiate end to UK pensioners cost-of-living index freeze

Canada is second only to Australia in number of UK pensioners: Gord Johns

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Courtenay-Alberni MP Gord Johns is urging the Canadian government to push for the kind of Social Security bilateral agreement the UK has with many other countries. (Submitted photo)

Courtenay-Alberni MP Gord Johns is asking Canada to negotiate an end to the cost-of-living index freeze by the UK government for recipients of the

British State Pension who live in Canada.

“Here in Courtenay-Alberni we have many retirees receiving the British State Pension and this directly affects their quality of life. Pensioners are losing tens of thousands of dollars over the course of their retirement,” said Johns, in a news release. “With the current inflation crisis, many seniors are having trouble making ends meet which is why it is critical this gets addressed without further delay.”

Canada is second only to Australia in its number of UK pensioners, with around 144,000 UK retirees, according to Johns.

The indexation of the pensions is entirely dependent on specific agreements between countries, and Canada does not have an indexing agreement with the UK.

Johns raised the pension issue with Canadian High Commissioner Ralph Goodale during a visit to the UK as part of the Canadian branch of the Commonwealth Association’s bilateral meetings in January. He also advocated for lifting the freeze with UK Members of Parliament and members of the House of Lords.

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Canada indexes pensions for its citizens living anywhere in the world. United Kingdom pensioners living in the US, European Union nations and many countries without significant ties to the UK get similar annual cost of living increases.

Johns wants Canada to resolve the pension issue prior to or included in any future trade talks with the UK.

“Pensions are deferred wages and they must be able to support the people who rely on them,” he said.

It is estimated the frozen British pensions cost the Canadian economy close to \$1 billion annually, according to The Canadian Alliance of British Pensioners.

Johns is urging the Canadian government to push for the kind of Social Security bilateral agreement the UK has with many other countries.

— *NEWS Staff, submitted*

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