

**Ministry of Community,  
Family & Children's Services**

Office of the Minister

Hepburn Block  
Queen's Park  
Toronto ON M7A 1E9  
(416) 325-5225

**Ministère des Services à la  
collectivité, à la famille et à  
l'enfance**

Bureau du Ministre

Édifice Hepburn  
Queen's Park  
Toronto ON M7A 1E9  
(416) 325-5225



November 7, 2002

Mr. Brian Hack  
RR 5  
Warton, Ontario  
N0H 2T0

Dear Mr. Hack:

Thank you for your Internet letter concerning Bill 118, the Ontario Disability Support Program Amendment Act, 2001.

As you may know, this government created a unique program of income and employment supports for Ontarians with disabilities, separate from the welfare system. ODSP is specifically designed to meet the unique needs of people with disabilities and provide them with greater opportunities for independence.

In designing ODSP, we listened to what Ontarians with disabilities and their advocates had to say. For this reason:

- ODSP recognizes that people with disabilities can and do want to work. People with disabilities are no longer labelled permanently unemployable under ODSP, as they were under the former Family Benefits (FBA) program.

We have already changed the system and made significant improvements over the former FBA. I would like to highlight some of these improvements:

- Under the ministry's Supports to Employment Program, the amount of earnings that a family can keep without deduction was increased from \$185 under FBA to \$235 per month. ODSP also provides a broad range of employment supports to assist people with disabilities to prepare for, obtain or maintain employment;
- Under FBA, the asset ceiling was \$3,000 for singles; \$5,000 for a couple and \$500 for each dependant other than a spouse. Under ODSP, the asset ceiling has been raised to \$5,000 for singles; \$7,500 for a couple and \$500 for each dependant other than a spouse;

.../cont'd

- Under ODSP, compensation awards for pain and suffering, inheritances held in trust and the cash surrender value of life insurance policies are exempt as assets up to \$100,000. Prior to ODSP, compensation awards were limited to a maximum of \$25,000; inheritances were limited to \$65,000; and the cash surrender value of life insurance policies had to be within the recipient's asset limit under FBA (i.e., \$3,000 for a single person); and,
- ODSP also provides incentives for families and friends to participate in providing additional support. For example, recipients are allowed to keep an amount of up to \$4,000 per year in the form of gifts for any purpose from any source.

Income support for single people with disabilities under ODSP remains the highest among the provinces and was protected when recipients were transferred from FBA to ODSP on June 1, 1998.

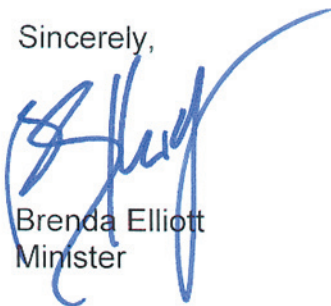
In our goal to improve the lives of people with disabilities, this government also passed the first Act for Ontarians with disabilities. The *Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2001* demonstrates our commitment to improved independence and opportunity for people with disabilities. With this new Act, we are reaffirming a strong commitment to a province that includes all Ontarians.

These improvements were made in response to concerns raised by people with disabilities. The Conservative government is committed to building on these improvements wherever and whenever it can.

I appreciate the time you have taken to share your concerns. Your comments are appreciated and will be considered as we move forward with improvements in ODSP.

Once again, thank you for writing.

Sincerely,



Brenda Elliott  
Minister