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Full name

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Paste submission

As an ODSP recipient I would like to speak to the Committee about the fact that Social Assistance rates have not risen in several years, despite the enormous increases in the costs of basic living needs. Rents are now due to rise for those living in private market rentals (the majority of recipients) and food costs have risen sharply since the last increase in the rates. If the disabled and chronically recipients of ODSP cannot afford even food how are they to survive? And that is for those who do have a home to live in. Nobody wants to live on ODSP, even for the stigma that is added to being an SA recipient, there is the dire poverty inflicted on recipients. We have been living way below the poverty line for many years. Added to our disabilities we also have to deal with the stresses of not being able to eat a minimally healthy diet.

As the number of households dependent on social assistance has dropped in recent years, we fail to understand why the government continues to leave us in this situation, Food banks are a poor substitute for the ability to go into a grocery store and buy milk, bread, a can of soup, a box of teabags, a can of tuna fish, some frozen vegetables. The food banks are overwhelmed, as are other charitable organizations who give us help.

Given the drive to move many government services online (most especially the government's current drive to "modernize" delivery of social assistance, most of us cannot afford the technology needed to keep up. Cell phones and computers, not to mention service charges for data plans on the phones or ISPs for computers are far beyond the means for recipients and I would like to request that even when rates for shelter and basic needs are covered, there should be an allowance for technology that would help recipients access modern technology.

Rate increases should be annual and geared to the rising cost of living with respect to the basics of shelter, food and other necessities of life.