

November 22, 2023, National Housing Day

Toronto. The Canadian government has declared housing to be a human right, but as organizations and governments observe National Housing Day, some are questioning the government's commitment. Seniors and people with disabilities are calling for the National Building Code and provincial building codes to be changed to mandate that all new apartments and condos be Universal Design - liveable for all ages and abilities.

The Accessible Housing Network's petition to the House of Commons has garnered more than 2700 signatures to date. Co-chair Sal Amenta notes that "CMHC has reported that the cost of building a new apartment is the same, whether it is accessible or not. So cost is not an issue."

AHN co-founder, Kate Chung, stresses, "The Canadian Human Rights Act, the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, and the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities prohibit discrimination on the basis of age or disability. Though these are supposed to take precedence over all other laws, they continue to be contravened by other legislation. The federal government's signing of the UN Convention and the Optional Protocol oblige all levels of government in Canada to end discrimination, including in housing, against seniors and people with disabilities." In 2002, the Ontario Human Rights Commission warned the Ontario Minister of Housing that the Ontario Building Code must be brought into compliance with the Ontario Human Rights Code. In 2020, the Human Rights Commission again called for the change. No action has been taken by the government.

The **Accessible Housing Network** is a non-partisan network of over 60 Canadian non-profit organizations working to end the extreme lack of accessible housing.

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Petition to House of Commons:

<https://www.ourcommons.ca/petitions/en/Petition/Details?Petition=e-4543>

2002 Submission of the Ontario Human Rights Commission Concerning barrier-free access requirements in the Ontario Building Code

<http://www3.ohrc.on.ca/en/submission-ontario-human-rights-commission-concerning-barrier-free-access-requirements-ontario>

2020 OHRC statement for National Housing Day November 22: Accessible housing makes social, economic sense http://www.ohrc.on.ca/en/news_centre/ohrc-statement-national-housing-day-november-22-accessible-housing-makes-social-economic-sense