

## **Canadians with disabilities search for accessible housing**

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**For Immediate Release**

Toronto - As the Ontario parliamentary election approaches, 15 candidates from 4 parties have signed the Accessible Housing Pledge.

One recent signer was Soo Wong, Liberal Party candidate in Scarborough-Agincourt. She'll be sharing the pledge with her Scarborough colleagues.



Candidate Sue Wong, with her signed Accessible Housing Pledge.

Photo courtesy, Soo Wong Campaign

The pledge commits candidates who are elected to actively work to change the Ontario Building Code to require that 100% of units in every new

multi-unit residential building be built according to universal design principles.

That way, anyone of any age or ability can live there.

Almost one-quarter of Canadians have a disability. Some search for years for housing that is adequately accessible.



Child's wheelchair squeezes through doorway. Courtesy AHN

The need for accessible housing is painfully obvious in this photo. Pamela, the mother of a young teen with severe cerebral palsy, says of her son's wheelchair: "It doesn't look big, but it makes it very difficult to enter, and he can't get into the apartment by himself. I have to turn him backwards and push the chair in while the power is on full throttle. The small lip on the threshold is very difficult to navigate in the power wheelchair."

Life would have been much easier if their apartment had been barrier-free from the time her son was younger, Pamela says. Because it was impossible to install a lift in the bathroom of her rented apartment, she was no longer able to lift her son in and out of the bathtub. Reluctantly, she placed him in a group home, which, fortunately, is nearby.

“The lack of accessible housing is a crisis,” states Accessible Housing Network co-chair Kate Chung. “There will be huge healthcare savings if people are not needlessly stuck in acute care hospitals or forced into long-term care. The cost of building a new apartment is the same whether accessible or not - if it is planned from the design stage. It is renovations to conventional housing which are expensive.”

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The **Accessible Housing Network (AHN)** is a non-partisan network supporting the human rights of persons with disabilities to end the extreme lack of accessible housing.

**For more information, please contact:**

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