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**Official Report
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(Hansard)**

SP-33

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**Standing Committee on
Social Policy**

Soldiers' Aid Commission Act,
2020

1st Session
42nd Parliament
Monday 26 October 2020

**Comité permanent de
la politique sociale**

Loi de 2020 sur la Commission
d'aide aux anciens combattants

1^{re} session
42^e législature
Lundi 26 octobre 2020

Chair: Natalia Kusendova
Clerk: Tanzima Khan

Présidente : Natalia Kusendova
Greffière : Tanzima Khan

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Service linguistique et des publications parlementaires
Salle 500, aile ouest, Édifice du Parlement
111, rue Wellesley ouest, Queen's Park
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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

**STANDING COMMITTEE ON
SOCIAL POLICY**

**COMITÉ PERMANENT DE
LA POLITIQUE SOCIALE**

Monday 26 October 2020

Lundi 26 octobre 2020

The committee met at 0900 in committee room 2 and by video conference.

SOLDIERS' AID COMMISSION ACT, 2020

**LOI DE 2020 SUR LA COMMISSION
D'AIDE AUX ANCIENS COMBATTANTS**

Consideration of the following bill:

Bill 202, An Act to continue the Soldiers' Aid Commission / Projet de loi 202, Loi prorogeant la Commission d'aide aux anciens combattants.

The Chair (Ms. Natalia Kusendova): Good morning, everyone. The Standing Committee on Social Policy will now come to order. We are here for clause-by-clause consideration of Bill 202, An Act to continue the Soldiers' Aid Commission.

With me in the room today, we have MPP Mike Harris. Welcome.

I will proceed now to do the attendance check. We have MPP Robin Martin. Good morning.

Mrs. Robin Martin: Good morning, Chair. It's Robin Martin. I'm here in Toronto, in the Legislature.

The Chair (Ms. Natalia Kusendova): Thank you very much. We have MPP Jennie Stevens with us.

Mrs. Jennifer (Jennie) Stevens: Good morning, Chair. I am MPP Jennie Stevens, and I am residing here in St. Catharines.

The Chair (Ms. Natalia Kusendova): Thank you very much. We have MPP Jeremy Roberts.

Mr. Jeremy Roberts: Good morning, Chair—present and in Ontario.

The Chair (Ms. Natalia Kusendova): Wonderful. And we have MPP Amy Fee.

Ms. Amy Fee: Good morning, Chair. I am at Queen's Park this morning.

The Chair (Ms. Natalia Kusendova): Thank you. Do we have anyone joining us by telephone this morning? No? Thank you very much.

We are joined by Ajay Ramkumar from the office of the legislative counsel as well as staff from Hansard and broadcast and recording.

To make sure that everyone can follow along, it is important that all participants speak slowly and clearly. Please wait until I recognize you before starting to speak. Since it could take a little time for your audio and video to come up after I recognize you, please take a brief pause before beginning. As always, all comments should go through the Chair.

When we do vote during today's meeting, it will be through a show of hands. I will start by asking, "Are the members ready to vote?" I will ask, "All those in favour, please raise your hand," and then I will ask, "All those opposed, please raise your hand." I will then declare the vote. Unless someone specifically asks for a recorded vote after I have asked whether the members are ready to vote, the breakdown of the vote will not show up in Hansard. Are there any questions at this time?

I see that we are joined by MPP Aris Babikian. Good morning.

Mr. Aris Babikian: Good morning.

The Chair (Ms. Natalia Kusendova): And you are calling in today from—

Mr. Aris Babikian: Scarborough—Agincourt.

The Chair (Ms. Natalia Kusendova): Thank you very much.

Seeing that there are no questions at this time, we will now begin the clause-by-clause consideration. Are there any brief comments on the bill as a whole before we proceed to section 1? Seeing none, we are ready to begin.

We will now be considering section 1—on page 1. I believe we have a government motion. MPP Roberts, go ahead.

Mr. Jeremy Roberts: I move that section 1 of the bill be amended by striking out the definition of "family member".

The Chair (Ms. Natalia Kusendova): Any debate?

I see that we are also joined by MPP Effie Triantafilopoulos. Good morning.

Ms. Effie J. Triantafilopoulos: Good morning, Chair.

The Chair (Ms. Natalia Kusendova): And you are calling in from—

Ms. Effie J. Triantafilopoulos: From Oakville, Ontario.

The Chair (Ms. Natalia Kusendova): Thank you very much.

Is there any debate on government motion number 1, on page 1? Seeing none, are members ready to vote? Shall government motion 1 carry? Those in favour, please raise your hand. Those opposed, please raise your hand. I declare the motion carried.

Shall section 1, as amended, carry? Those in favour, please raise your hand—

Interjection.

The Chair (Ms. Natalia Kusendova): My apologies. Before we vote, is there any debate on section 1 as a whole? Seeing none, shall section 1, as amended, carry?

Please raise your hand. Those opposed, please raise your hand. I declare section 1, as amended, carried.

We will now proceed to section 2, “Commission continued.” Is there any debate on section 2? Seeing none, shall section 2 carry? Those in favour, please raise your hand. Those opposed, please raise your hand. I declare section 2 carried.

We will now move on to section 3, “Objects.” I believe we have an NDP motion on section 3. MPP Stevens.

Mrs. Jennifer (Jennie) Stevens: I move that section 3 of the bill be amended by adding the following subsection:

“Treatment of financial assistance for other purposes

“(2) Despite any other act, for the purpose of determining an individual’s entitlement under a government assistance program under which the individual’s eligibility is based in whole or in part on the individual’s income, financial assistance provided by the commission is not income.”

The Chair (Ms. Natalia Kusendova): Any debate? MPP Stevens.

Mrs. Jennifer (Jennie) Stevens: I just want to make it clear that this amendment clarifies that assistance from the commission shall not be considered as income when determining the entitlements under a government assistance program, such as ODSP, Ontario Works or rent-geared-to-income housing. The Royal Canadian Legion also made that clear during their submission.

I would like a recorded vote.

The Chair (Ms. Natalia Kusendova): MPP Roberts.

Mr. Jeremy Roberts: I appreciate the amendment put forward by MPP Stevens.

As Minister Smith indicated during his presentation to committee last week, the Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services already intends to exempt this funding through regulation for the purpose of social assistance. This would mean that financial assistance received through the commission would not have any impact on the support an individual may receive through programs like Ontario Works and the Ontario Disability Support Program, ODSP. Income exemptions such as these are regularly made through regulation. Currently, there are more than 40 income exemptions listed for ODSP and OW in the regulation, including exemptions for donations received from religious, charitable or benevolent organizations; gifts or voluntary payments for any purpose of up to \$10,000 in a 12-month period; and the list goes on.

Recipients accessing Ontario Works and ODSP, as well as service providers and family members, typically look to the regulations under each of the acts governing our province’s social assistance programs to find the complete list of these types of exemptions. So adding the exemption to this piece of legislation rather than through regulation could mean that the information would not be as clear or as readily available to veterans and to the public in the same location where every other exemption is listed.

While I can assure MPP Stevens that the goal of her amendment will absolutely be met, I would not be

supporting this amendment because I feel it’s much better placed in the regulations.

Again, to clarify: We will absolutely be ensuring that there is an exemption for these funds under the regulations. I think that will be the clearest spot for our veterans and family members.

The Chair (Ms. Natalia Kusendova): Any further debate? Seeing none, are members ready to vote?

We have a phone-in. Whoever is on the phone, can you please identify yourself and state where you’re calling from? Once again, I would ask the member who is calling in this morning from the telephone to please identify yourself and state where you are calling from.

Mrs. Belinda C. Karahalios: Good morning, Chair. It’s Belinda calling from Cambridge.

The Chair (Ms. Natalia Kusendova): Thank you very much. Good morning, MPP Karahalios.

MPP Stevens?

0910

Mrs. Jennifer (Jennie) Stevens: Recorded vote.

The Chair (Ms. Natalia Kusendova): Yes, thank you very much. Since members are ready to vote, we will have a recorded vote. Since we have a phone-in, we will have to call each person one at a time.

The process for this vote: The Clerk will call on each MPP, and at that time the MPP can state “aye,” “nay” or “abstain.” Does everyone understand? Thank you.

Ayes

Stevens.

Nays

Babikian, Fee, Harris, Karahalios, Martin, Roberts, Triantafilopoulos.

The Chair (Ms. Natalia Kusendova): I declare the motion lost.

We will now move on to section 3 as a whole. Is there any debate? Seeing none, are members ready to vote? Shall section 3 carry? I declare section 3 carried.

We will now move on to section 4 and section 5. Since there are no amendments, does the committee agree to bundle them together? Thank you.

Is there any debate on section 4—“General powers”—and section 5? Seeing none, are members ready to vote? We will proceed to the vote. I declare section 4 and section 5 carried.

We will now move on to section 6, “Board of directors.” We have a government motion. MPP Roberts.

Mr. Jeremy Roberts: I move that subsection 6(3) of the bill be amended by striking out “family members of veterans” at the end and substituting “individuals who are either the parent, spouse, child or sibling of a veteran”.

The Chair (Ms. Natalia Kusendova): Any debate? Seeing no debate, are members ready to vote?

Mr. Jeremy Roberts: Just a clarification, Chair: Given that there is no debate here, I don’t think a recorded vote

is needed. Are we able to do a straight up or down raised-hand vote, as at the beginning?

The Chair (Ms. Natalia Kusendova): Unfortunately, because we have a member calling in by phone, we have to do a roll call.

Mr. Jeremy Roberts: Okay. Thanks for the clarification.

The Chair (Ms. Natalia Kusendova): No problem.

In terms of the government motion on page 3, those in favour? I declare the motion carried.

We will now move on to section 6 as a whole. Is there any debate? Seeing none, shall section 6, as amended, carry? I declare section 6, as amended, carried.

We will now move on to sections 7 through to 10. Since we don't have any amendments to sections 7 through to 10, does the committee agree to bundle them together? Thank you.

Is there any debate on sections 7 through to 10? Seeing none, are members ready to vote? Shall sections 7 through to 10 carry? I declare sections 7 through to 10 carried.

We will now move on to section 11, "Regulations." I believe we have a government motion. MPP Roberts.

Mr. Jeremy Roberts: I move that clause 11(a) of the bill be struck out and the following substituted:

"(a) defining the term 'veteran' for the purposes of this act;"

The Chair (Ms. Natalia Kusendova): Is there any debate? Seeing none, are members ready to vote? Shall government motion number 3 carry? I declare this motion carried.

We will now move on to the next government motion on page 5. MPP Roberts.

Mr. Jeremy Roberts: I move that subclause 11(d)(iii) of the bill be amended by adding "including prescribing

family members of veterans who are eligible for assistance" at the end.

The Chair (Ms. Natalia Kusendova): Is there any debate? Seeing none, are members ready to vote? Those in favour of government motion number 4? I declare this motion carried.

0920

We will now move on to consider section 11, as amended. Is there any debate? Seeing none, are members ready to vote? Shall section 11, as amended, carry? I declare section 11, as amended, carried.

We will now move on to sections 12, 13, 14 and 15. Since there are no amendments, does the committee agree to bundle them together? Thank you.

Is there any debate on sections 12, 13, 14 and 15? Seeing none, are members ready to vote? I declare sections 12, 13, 14 and 15 carried.

We will now move on to the preamble of the bill. Is there any debate on the preamble of the bill? Seeing none, shall the preamble of the bill carry? I declare the preamble of the bill carried.

We will now move on to the title of the bill. Is there any debate on the title of the bill? Seeing none, are members ready to vote? I declare the title of the bill carried.

We will now move on to consider Bill 202 as a whole. Is there any debate on Bill 202 as a whole? Seeing none, are members ready to vote? Shall Bill 202, as amended, carry? I declare Bill 202, as amended, carried.

Shall I report the bill, as amended, to the House? I declare that I will report the bill to the House, as amended.

Thank you, everyone. That concludes our business for today. Thank you to our staff and to all participating members this morning. Have a wonderful day.

The committee adjourned at 0926.

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