



Jessica Bell
MPP University–Rosedale

Queen's Park
Room 372, Legislative Building
Queen's Park • Toronto, ON M7A 1A5
☎ 416-325-1620 📠 416-325-1424
✉ JBell-QP@ndp.on.ca

Community Office
Unit 103, 719 Bloor St. W
Toronto, ON M6G 1L5
☎ 416-535-7206
✉ JBell-CO@ndp.on.ca

August 15, 2019

Hon. Raymond Sung Joon Cho
Minister for Seniors and Accessibility
College Park, 5th Floor
777 Bay St.
Toronto, ON M5G 2C8

Dear Minister Cho,

I am writing to urge the provincial government to review the *Retirement Homes Act*, including how it interacts with the *Residential Tenancies Act*, in response to the sudden announcement of closure by Davenhill Senior Living, a licensed retirement home in my riding of University Rosedale. The 150 senior residents of Davenhill now face uncertainty and instability in their lives because the current laws do not adequately protect them.

Over the past few weeks, my office has been in contact with many of the residents who are frantically looking for new homes, as well as concerned seniors advocacy and housing organizations. These conversations have highlighted many concerning issues that should be investigated as part of this review.

Family members have informed me their loved ones have been suffering from mental and physical health issues caused by the unreasonable notice to leave period that Davenhill has given to residents. Five months is simply not enough time for seniors to be uprooted and forced to find alternative homes and care services, especially given the scarcity of senior housing in Toronto. The search for alternative accommodation is further exacerbated by our city's affordable housing crisis, resulting in skyrocketing housing costs that are difficult for many elderly people to afford on a fixed income. Many have also stressed that they do not want to leave what they thought would be their final home.

It has been shocking to learn from family members and Davenhill residents that Davenhill were not required to inform residents of their basic rights under the *Residential Tenancies Act* including their right to compensation. It was also distressing to learn that residents will lose their right to compensation if they choose to take alternative accommodation provided by the landlord despite the fact that they will still be taking on costs related to the move. Moreover, residents expressed to me that they do not believe Davenhill properly informed them of the timing and reason for closing their home as required under the *Retirement Homes Act*.

It was also very concerning to learn about the larger issues that affect the security of seniors living in retirement homes across Ontario. The ability for seniors to have access to secure housing and services is jeopardized by provisions in the *Retirement Homes Act* that permits a retirement home to remove and/or dramatically increase the cost of critical services, such as meals and nursing, well above the level of cost recovery. This means seniors could be forced to leave their homes simply because they can't afford the new fees for services they require. Seniors deserve better protections from eviction.

Ontario's seniors have a right to be treated with respect and live in a quality, secure and affordable home. I urge this government to review the current regulation of retirement homes to address these issues and ensure seniors have the protections they deserve to live with dignity and respect.

I would like to meet with you to discuss the above concerns at your earliest convenience. I look forward to your response.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Jessica Bell".

Jessica Bell, MPP
University—Rosedale

cc:

Hon. Steve Clark
Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing
steve.clark@pc.ola.org

Jay O'Neill
CEO and Regulator, Retirement Homes Regulatory Authority
info@rhra.ca

Dan Tomlinson
Board Chair, Davenhill Senior Living
dtomlinson@davenhillliving.com