

Ottawa Journal by David Tilson MP ? Liberal government failing our troops fighting ISIS

The Canadian Armed Forces (CAF) is a great source of pride for all Canadians and for a very good reason. They courageously serve our country and ensure our peace and freedom. We owe it to these outstanding men and women to stand by them for the exceptional service they give to Canada. It is, therefore, incomprehensible that the current Liberal government is taking away a tax benefit which provides \$1,500 to \$1,800 per month for Canadian troops fighting against ISIS. This is hardly standing by our country's finest.

The loss of the tax benefit, which is given to troops who meet a particular set of criteria associated with the level of risk of their duties and hardship they face where they're stationed overseas, was first experienced by 15 soldiers at Camp Arifjjan last September. After the issue was raised on multiple occasions by Conservative MPs, the current Liberal government decided to end the benefit entirely for all Canadian troops deployed in Kuwait. What's even more surprising is that the current government still moved forward in taking away this benefit when the U.S. government provides tax exemption status to its soldiers fighting ISIS.

The current Liberal government appears to have forgotten that the tremendous men and women of the CAF volunteer to leave their families as they travel abroad to perform dangerous work and they put themselves at risk in service of their country. They miss important milestones with their families, such as birthdays, anniversaries and graduations when serving abroad. The current government has now known for months that Canadian troops who are deployed in the fight against ISIS haven't been adequately compensated for the risk and hardship associated with their deployment.

The decision to discontinue the tax benefit for Canadian troops deployed in the fight against ISIS was made after the troops had agreed to be deployed. In cutting this benefit, the current government has cheated our troops and their families out of hard-earned money that they expected, counted upon and deserve. It's completely shocking this current government, which appears to have no concern about racking up record deficits, would choose to tighten the purse strings on the backs of the hard working men and women of the CAF. Their solution to this issue is equally appalling ? instead of restoring the benefits our troops at Camp Arifjjan deserve, they decided to revoke the benefit for all our troops who are fighting ISIS.

The Conservative Official Opposition, in contrast, has been listening to the families of those affected. We have raised the issue on multiple occasions. Prime Minister Trudeau has no excuse for raising taxes on our troops. While he plans to deploy our troops on a dangerous mission to Africa for no other reason than to win himself a seat on the United Nations Security Council, our troops who are already deployed in the fight against ISIS are being neglected.

Our troops deserve our full support. We call on the current government to finally do its job, reverse this abhorrent decision to revoke important benefits for our troops, and support these brave men and women who stand on guard for all of us. They deserve nothing less from their government.

