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Happenings

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Bill C-81: An Accessible Canada Act Passes

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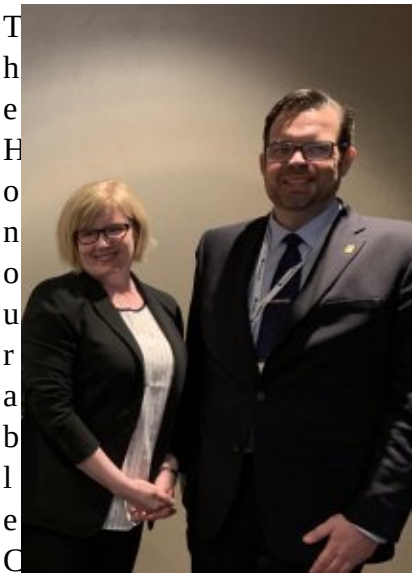
Nearly a year after Bill C-81: An Act to Ensure a Barrier Free Canada, was introduced in the House of Commons, the legislation returned and on May 29, 2019 and was passed.

CHHA Executive Director Chris Sutton at the Senate Committee on Social Affairs, Science, and Technology.

This legislation is historic and while it's had its ups and downs the past year as it made its rounds through committees, when the final vote was called, it's the only legislation that has received full support from all political parties. This is something we have not seen in the House of Commons in a long time.

As a person who has lived with hearing loss my whole life, with the bill passing on May 29, with May being "Better Hearing and Speech Month," this year it called for a very special and historical celebration.



The Honourable Carla Qualtrough, Minister of Public Services, Procurement and Accessibility and CHHA Executive Director Chris Sutton.

The Honourable Carla Qualtrough, Minister of Public Services, Procurement and Accessibility, spoke at the Canadian Hard of Hearing Association 2019 Educational Conference & Trade Show, on May 29, 2019. This is a true testimony that demonstrated the partnership between government and grassroots organizations like CHHA had in making this legislation possible.

Now that Bill C-81 has passed, this does not mean we wake up to a barrier free Canada overnight. The legislation lays the foundation necessary to create the establishment of several new entities that will oversee the groundwork required in making a barrier free Canada by 2040. Part of this work is creating standards and regulations, which will only apply to Government Regulated Entities such as the CRTC, Banks, Canadian Transportation Agency and so forth.

However, it is the disability community's hope that the Federal government's lead will ensure that provinces without accessibility legislation will follow and create their own legislations, and that business across Canada who are not impacted by these standards and regulations, will voluntarily comply. Doing so will create a barrier free and inclusive Canada for all!

Right now, is a time for celebration. The past 3 years organizations like ours and people living with disabilities came together and told the government what we needed to ensure that such legislation worked for us. Our call was answered and now the real work begins.

As we prepare to sit at the table to be part of the development of these standards and regulations, we will need to focus on making sure our voices are heard and that the standards and regulations developed will positively impact our communities. This will ensure that all people living with hearing loss are able to live without barriers.

To learn more about our work with Bill C-81 and to be updated on the work we are doing to ensure Bill C-81 meets the needs of people living with hearing loss visit www.chha.ca.

House of Commons Standing Committee on the Status of Women Recommendation on Hearing Health

Congratulations to the Hearing Health Alliance of Canada (HHAC) in its quest to improve hearing

health for Canadians.

This year the House of Commons Committee on the Status of Women addressed the issues faced by senior women. The HHAC was invited to appear before the committee. The HOC Committee summarized recommendations in their own words and presented them to the Federal Government.

The Standing Committee on the Status of Women has just recommended:

That the Government of Canada, in collaboration with provinces and territories, ensure equitable access for all seniors to hearing health care and assistive devices, and work with appropriate agencies to increase public awareness to prevent hearing loss, to identify and manage hearing loss and to destigmatize hearing loss. (recommendation 15)

View the full list of recommendations