

Dear \_\_\_\_\_,

I am writing to you as a concerned citizen regarding the recent legislative trend that involves embedding significant amendments to food and drug laws within broader budget implementation acts, such as Bill C-69, the Budget Implementation Act of 2024 No. 1. This method of legislative amendment poses substantial risks to public transparency and undermines the essential oversight functions of specialized parliamentary committees.

Firstly, the practice of including non-budgetary changes—specifically those pertaining to food and drugs law—within budget bills is deeply concerning. Budget bills are typically voluminous and complex, and the inclusion of critical amendments that affect public health within these documents means that such changes may go unnoticed by the public until they are enacted. This lack of transparency is unacceptable in a democratic society, particularly when the changes involved have far-reaching implications on the health and well-being of Canadians.

Furthermore, when such amendments are included in budget bills, they bypass the scrutiny of the Standing Committee on Health, the body that possesses the requisite expertise to assess the impacts of proposed changes on the health sector. Instead, these bills are reviewed by the Standing Committee on Finance, which, while proficient in economic matters, lacks the specialized knowledge necessary to evaluate the nuances and potential consequences of food and drug regulations.

This procedural oversight is not just a technicality but a significant lapse in ensuring that critical health-related legislation undergoes thorough review by the most knowledgeable and appropriate bodies. The Standing Committee on Health is specifically designed to consider the complexities and specificities of health legislation, and its exclusion from the process undermines its purpose and denies the legislation the benefit of expert evaluation.

Given the substantial nature of the changes contained in Division 31 of Bill C-69, which include expanded powers for Health Canada over the off-label use of drugs and the regulation of natural health products, it is imperative that these amendments are subjected to a more fitting legislative process. Such a process would ensure greater transparency, allow for expert scrutiny, and facilitate public engagement and understanding.

Therefore, I urge you, as my representative in Parliament, to advocate for the removal of non-budgetary health amendments from budget bills. This change in the legislative process is crucial to maintaining the integrity of our health laws and the health of all Canadians.

I also urge to advocate for the repeal of Division 31 of Bill C-39, the Budget Implementation Act of 2024 No. 1, now that it has become law. These types of amendments should be referred to the Standing Committee on Health, where they can be properly examined and debated.

I trust that you will consider this matter with the seriousness it warrants and represent the concerns of your constituents by promoting transparency, expertise, and appropriate legislative scrutiny in all matters related to public health.

Thank you for your attention to this crucial issue. I look forward to your support and action.

Respectfully,

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Signed

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Dated