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April 13, 2020

Dear Mr. Prime Minister Justin Trudeau:

Since 1935 the Canadian Federation of Music Teachers (CFMTA) has worked to bring quality music education to Canadian students. Like many self -employed Canadians, our 3200 members are facing unprecedented challenges in the way we provide our services due to the restrictions imposed by the government during the COVID – 19 pandemic

Despite the best efforts of some of our teachers to provide lessons using on-line platforms such as Skype, Facetime and Zoom not all students are able to participate in their regular weekly lesson. This may be due to a poor internet signal, a lack of required equipment or financial restraints of our students’ families. This reduction in student enrolment has resulted in a serious loss of income for the private music teachers across Canada. In a recent survey of our members, 74% of respondents report being concerned about their current financial situation while 81% report they do not qualify for the CERB benefits as currently offered. This is in part due to the stipulation that one must be unemployed and receiving **no pay** for a minimum of 14 days in order to qualify.

**“If you are submitting for the first time, that you have stopped or will stop working for reasons related to COVID-19 for at least 14 consecutive days within the 4 week benefit period”** Government of Canada website.

This stipulation is most unfair to those teachers who are seeking to continue offering lessons to a reduced number of students. Further, in this context our government is penalizing teachers who seek to continue as many weekly lessons as possible while still experiencing a considerable loss of income.

The Canadian Federation of Music Teachers respectfully request the following

1. That the government realize that many teachers, in continuing to offer music lessons, are providing a much-needed sense of normalcy and continuity in the lives of students.
2. That the government discontinue the policy that prevents teachers from accessing much needed funds simply because they aren’t willing to abandon all their students.
3. That Canadian music teachers not be penalized for offering a vital service to Canadian music students who seek to continue their musical education in these trying times.
4. That financial consideration be given to those music teachers who are continuing to offer weekly lessons.
5. That the government expand the guidelines to allow for a teacher to continue to teach music, yet still receive CERB benefits.

It is a well known fact that exposure to the arts has many benefits – socially, academically, and not least importantly, psychologically. By reaching out to Canadian music teachers and their families the government will show its support of arts education and those who provide it in Canada.

The Canadian Federation of Music Teachers Association asks that the Government of Canada consider our proposal to include benefits for our struggling music teachers across Canada. We look forward to being of service and offer our support to help in putting forward those financial benefits for those who most need it.

Thank you for your time and attention to this matter. We look forward to hearing from you at your earliest convenience.

Respectfully yours,

Laureen Kells, P/E Ped LicCNCM, RMT

President, Canadian Federation of Music Teachers Association

cc: Honorable Andrew Sheer, Leader of the Conservative Party of Canada.

cc: Jagmeet Singh, Leader of the New Democratic Party of Canada

cc: Honorable Bill Morneau, Minister of Finance

cc: Jo-Ann Roberts, Interim Leader, Green Party

cc: Cathy Waganthall, Member of Parliament, Yorkton – Melville Constituency

cc: Yves-Francois Blanchet, Leader of the Bloc Quebecois