



HOUSE OF COMMONS
CHAMBRE DES COMMUNES
CANADA

Heather McPherson

Member of Parliament
Edmonton Strathcona

March 2, 2026

The Honourable Gary Anandasangaree, C.P., M.P.
Minister of Public Safety
269 Laurier Street West
Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0P8

Dear Honourable Minister Anandasangaree,

It has come to my attention that the Canada Border Services Agency is currently undertaking a blanket review of existing accommodation agreements for Border Services Officers who have restrictions regarding arming and/or use of force. This review, as rolled out by CBSA, fails to meet the most basic principles of accommodation without discrimination, showing blatant disregard by the Agency for its Human Rights obligations as an employer.

As I'm sure you are aware, around 200 Border Services Officers working to protect Canada's borders are currently accommodated due to restrictions (medical or other) around arming and use of force, such as carrying a duty firearm. While occasionally such restrictions prevent officers from fulfilling the full range of duties associated with use of force, these employees bring invaluable expertise to the Agency and proudly continue to serve Canadians.

Most importantly, the Agency, as an employer, has a legal obligation under the Canadian Human Rights Act and existing collective agreements to protect people with disabilities from discrimination. While it is within an employer's right to periodically review accommodation agreements, this review must be done on a case-by-case basis and there must be a genuine attempt to exhaust all accommodation options before considering demotion or relocation.

That is why I am writing today - to raise concerns about the blanket nature of the ongoing review. This blanket review along with interactions and communications between the Agency and affected employees shows that CBSA is failing to uphold these principles, and that the Agency has already concluded that accommodated officers are simply unable to continue as Border Services Officers

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and must therefore be demoted, relocated *and* demoted, medically retired, or terminated for medical incapacity. Again, there is no evidence that the Agency has even attempted to treat each employee on a case-by-case basis, nor is there any evidence that it has sought to genuinely understand the reasons why individual employees cannot be armed, or that it has engaged in meaningful dialogue with affected employees to tailor sensible solutions.

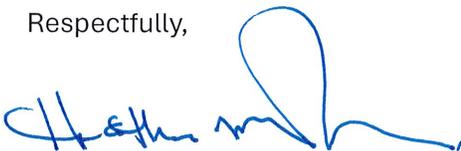
If CBSA genuinely cared to retain the crucial expertise of these employees, it would find that, in many cases, accommodating these officers is far from complicated and that forced demotion, relocation, or medical retirement are not only discriminatory, but unnecessarily callous avenues to consider. For example:

- A Border Services Officer at Edmonton International Airport, who has been unable to be armed since 2017 due to a medical condition, has been accommodated as a BSO, working in Nexus, CARM, commercial and other similar operations for 9 years. Crucially, not only could this officer be certified to carry other tools but, due to Transport Canada regulations, BSOs in airports are not even allowed to wear their sidearms in the terminal. Yet, this employee is still facing potential relocation and/or demotion due to their disability.
- A Border Services Officers working at the Coutts, AB, land border port of entry was injured on the job approximately two years ago. This person was physically injured during a methamphetamine seizure, while protecting Canadians from the importation of illegal drugs, and has not been able to be armed or tooled since then due to injury. The officer has been accommodated as a BSO doing warrant reviews, EDIs, etc. since that time but is now facing almost certain relocation.
- A decorated Border Services Officer from Northern Ontario who suffered an injury and, as a result, has been working in Nexus only requires a lighter firearm to be returned to full duty, which the Agency has failed to provide. This officer is now facing relocation hundreds of kilometers away.

The list of duties accommodated officers can perform is vast. I am sure you will agree with me that it does not make sense for CBSA to push out 200 trained, highly qualified officers who bring years of experience to the table, at the same time your government has made it a priority to hire a thousand new border officers and workers. Canada simply cannot afford to lose this expertise.

Will you commit to ensuring that the Canada Border Services Agency respect its human rights and legal obligations, and treat these officers with the dignity they are owed by affording them a meaningful, fair and just accommodation process? I look forward to your response.

Respectfully,



Heather McPherson
Member of Parliament for Edmonton Strathcona