



Jonathan Wilkinson

FEDERAL MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT
NORTH VANCOUVER-CAPILANO

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Stretched Thin: Why North Shore Non-Profits Need Us Now

Every day, my constituency team and I meet people whose lives have been touched by the North Shore's extraordinary not-for-profit social service organizations.

Whether it's a parent finding support at Family Services of the North Shore, a teen in crisis receiving housing through Hollyburn Community Services, a senior connecting with Silver Harbour, or a newcomer learning English at Impact North Shore - these groups form an invisible web of care that strengthens our entire community.

But if there's one thing our office has heard repeatedly this year, it's that while this sector has never been more invaluable, it has also never been more strained. This is backed up by a new report from the BC Non-Profit Network.

Stretched Thin: 2025 State of BC's Non-Profit Sector report confirms what local organizations have been telling us for months. Demand for community programs is soaring. On the North Shore, this means more families seeking housing supports, more seniors needing help to stay connected, and more residents turning to food banks and meal programs. Across B.C., nearly nine in ten non-profits say community need now exceeds their capacity to respond - a record high.

Yet while pressures mount, revenues have not kept pace. Many organizations are facing flat or declining donations, rising administrative costs, and escalating wages needed simply to keep

dedicated staff from burning out.

One in three non-profits in British Columbia now doubts its sustainability beyond the next year. Smaller community-based groups are especially vulnerable. Many have frozen hiring, trimmed services, or are relying on exhausted teams of part-time workers and volunteers to "do more with less."

Our local experience bears this out. We regularly meet non-profit directors juggling grant applications late into the night or diverting program dollars to cover rent, insurance, or staff retention. These organizations are the connective tissue of our community, yet those who hold them together are stretched to the breaking point.

As we enter what many charities call the "giving season," it's worth remembering that the strength of our social fabric depends on each of us. The weeks ahead are when many non-profits secure the donations that sustain them through the year.

If you are able, consider supporting a North Shore organization close to your heart. A small monthly gift, a few volunteer hours, or a contribution to a community drive can make a lasting difference.

The North Shore has always been a place defined by compassion and engagement. This season, let's honour the organizations that hold us together—and ensure that those who care for the most vulnerable have the support they need to keep caring for all of us.

Contact us: **Constituency Office 604-775-6333**

Email: **Jonathan.Wilkinson@parl.gc.ca**

Website: **JonathanWilkinson.libparl.ca**