

Tories defeat home-care motion

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Yvonne Jones said emergency aid is needed for seniors 'falling through the cracks.' (CBC)

Newfoundland and Labrador's governing Tories used their large majority Wednesday to defeat easily a motion calling for emergency aid for seniors.

The Liberals proposed to help seniors who have spoken out in recent weeks about lack of home care, particularly St. John's resident Patrick Connors, who has been told he would have to give up half his monthly income to qualify.

Liberal Leader Yvonne Jones, who proposed the private member's motion, said current financial assessment tools simply are not helping people who need government aid, especially seniors living on fixed incomes.

"This is not about politics," Jones told the legislature.

"It is about finding real solutions on an interim basis for those people in our province who need it, and, Mr. Speaker, there are many out there today who are falling through the cracks. Not only are seniors, but people who are living with disabilities in their lives and require home care services as well."



Tory MHA Darin King criticized the Liberal proposal as 'a motion on the fly.' (CBC)

The governing Progressive Conservatives have launched a review of home-care policies, although critics say help is needed now.

But Darin King, the PC member for Grand Bank, described the Liberal proposal as "a motion on the fly" and one that would not solve problems over the long term.

"One of the challenges that all governments face is developing comprehensive, long-term strategic directions and plans that guide us into the future and take us in a direction that is well thought out and well planned," King said.

New Democratic Leader Lorraine Michael supported the Liberal motion.

"How do we determine how close to death somebody has to be in order to get home care?" Michael asked during debate in the house of assembly. "How do we determine how sick somebody has to be in order to get home care?"

"What I would like to put to my colleagues and the government is, why are you so adamant about not understanding the nature of the need for home care?"

Thirty members of the PC caucus, however, stood to defeat the motion, overwhelming the four votes in favour.