
Campaign 2000 and Partners Call on Government to Step Up Poverty Legislation in Open Letter

Ottawa, ON, February 19, 2019 – Ahead of the federal government’s legislation of Canada’s Poverty Reduction Strategy (CPRS), Campaign 2000, and partners at the *Dignity for All Campaign*, have sent an open letter to Minister Jean-Yves Duclos with recommendations to strengthen Bill C-87, *An Act respecting the reduction of poverty*.

More than 100 organizations from coast to coast to coast have signed the letter, including national and regional groups and over 400 individuals nation-wide have signed on. Notable organizational signatories include the Canadian Alliance to End Homelessness, the Canadian Health Coalition, the First Nations Child & Family Caring Society, Oxfam Canada, Child Care Now, UNICEF Canada, the Canadian Teachers’ Federation, Canadian Labour Congress, YWCA, and Unifor, among others.

Along with Canada’s first anti-poverty strategy, this legislation provides a historic opportunity for federal leadership. With our global commitments to end poverty by 2030, the time is now to implement anti-poverty legislation that moves us forward to a more just and equal Canada. Moreover, Campaign 2000 calls on all parties, First Nations governments, provinces and territories to be ambitious for child and family poverty eradication and support investments in poverty reduction based on a bold vision and decisive action to reduce poverty by 50% in 5 years.

Anita Khanna, National Coordinator of Campaign 2000, says the details contained in the forthcoming legislation will have serious repercussions for those experiencing poverty in Canada. “After decades of promises to end child poverty, we finally have legislation that will help us hold government accountable for action or inaction in continually reducing poverty. All parties claim a commitment to children and families, yet we are now in the thirtieth year of the all-party resolution to end child poverty by the year 2000 and 1.4 million children still live in poverty. The open letter outlines clear steps to help get this legislation right so the long-awaited CPRS lives up to its potential to make poverty history.”

This Bill comes at a critical moment in Canada’s history. With the upcoming federal election later this year, the group is urging the government to pass legislation for the CPRS before the end of this parliamentary session. Among its five key recommendations, the letter outlines the need to improve Canada’s Official Poverty Line (the Market Basket Measure), establish the National Advisory Council on Poverty as an independent body, and raise the ambitious goal to end poverty in Canada by 2030.

“Canada needs to strengthen the CPRS and commit to ending poverty by 2030. This is a once in a lifetime opportunity and we cannot allow this historic legislation to let any Canadians be left behind,” adds Khanna.

Campaign 2000 is a non-partisan, cross-Canada network of 120 national, provincial and community partner organizations committed to working to end child and family poverty that is hosted by Family Service Toronto. Learn more at t <https://campaign2000.ca/>

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BACKGROUND ON CHILD AND FAMILY POVERTY IN CANADA

- **Nearly 1 in 5 children in Canada (19.6%) and 37.9% of First Nations children live in poverty.**
- **Poverty discriminates against children in families that are lone female-led, racialized, immigrant and Indigenous or affected by disabilities.** One in four racialized children, one in three children of immigrants and two in five of children in lone-mother led families are in poverty, leading to persistent social and economic inequality.
- **Children under 6 are more likely to live in poverty;** 20.7% at the national level, up to 42.5% in Nunavut.
- **One in six children in Canada are food insecure.** Lacking access to adequate, safe, good-quality, nutritious food due to financial constraints.
- **The poverty reduction strategy's targets will leave at least 700,000 children in poverty by 2030**
- **Canada still needs a national childcare program.** There are only enough regulated child care spaces to cover 29% of children aged 0 – 5 years old.
- **The Canada Child Benefit is reducing poverty and material deprivation –** child poverty rates down by up to 18% according to the Market Basket Measure
- **Canada needs a good jobs strategy and decent wages:** The federal government should lead by example and restore a \$15/hour minimum wage for workers in federally regulated industries and improve the accessibility of Employment Insurance
- **Government transfers prevent poverty:** nearly 860,000 additional children would live in poverty without transfers.

SOURCE: Campaign 2000's 2018 National Report Card, *Bold Ambitions for Child and Family Poverty Eradication*