



## **Attention: The National Steering Committee of Campaign 2000**

Dear Friends,

Thank you so much for writing and for your continued strong advocacy for ending child poverty, and poverty more broadly. New Democrats are your natural allies in this struggle and we have put forth several commitments in this campaign to meet this shared goal.

We have tremendous respect for Campaign 2000 and the policies for which you advocate. We hope likewise that you and your members and friends will understand and appreciate that, in this campaign alone, we have received more than 200 questionnaires from different organizations and tens of thousands of individual emails from across Canada on a number of issues. As such, the unfortunate reality is that we simply do not have the capacity to reply to each of your questions in a fulsome manner. With that being said, we are happy to provide you with information about our relevant economic and poverty related commitments.

In 1989, NDP Leader Ed Broadbent rose in the House of Commons to put forward a successful motion to end child poverty in Canada by the year 2000. Thirty years after Canada's pledge more than a million Canadian children are still living in poverty. Children are still going to school on an empty stomach and growing up without a place to call home. That's because back-to-back Liberal and Conservative governments have created a patchwork of underfunded supports that still leave millions of Canadians struggling on the margins. The Liberals even brought forward a poverty reduction strategy without a single dollar of new spending – telling Canadians who need help now that they have to wait.

We need the courage – and meaningful action – to build a Canada without poverty, where all Canadians can count on quality public services and community supports to help them lead dignified lives.

A core component of our approach is enshrining the right to housing in law and starting work now with a goal of ending homelessness in Canada within a decade. In a country as wealthy as Canada, there is no excuse to leave any Canadian living in poverty without a safe roof over their head. Our affordable housing strategy will include measures to support Canadians at risk of becoming homeless, take the lead from communities about local needs, and adopt a "housing first" approach. To help people find an affordable home in the long term, we will support the creation of 500,000 units of quality, affordable housing in the next ten years, with half of that done within five years. This will be achieved with the right mix of effective measures that work in partnership with provinces and municipalities, build capacity for social, community, and affordable housing providers and co-ops, and meet environmental energy efficiency goals.

Poor health and poverty are linked and a national pharmacare program will mean that all Canadians can access the prescription medicine they need, regardless of their income, or address. Better access to mental health and addictions support will also form a key part of our approach to tackling poverty.

As disruptive economic forces change the nature of employment in Canada it is important that proper support programs are in place in to help Canadians adapt to the changing labour demands. Indeed, with a steep rise in the utilization of automated systems and a marked decrease in carbon intensive activities, entire categories of employment are disappearing. In response to these new economic realities, New

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Democrats will work with the provinces to launch a national basic income pilot project in addition to continuing Ontario's program, in order to gather data about this approach to tackling income precarity.

Young families need access to quality, affordable child care. But today, there is an affordability crisis in child care across the country. Families are struggling to find child care spaces and get on waitlists – before their children are even born. Costs are unaffordable in many cities. And parents are forced to make impossible choices between delaying their return to work or paying huge amounts for the child care they need. To help ensure that women, and single women in particular, are able to enter the workplace, we are also proposing a national, public, universal child care program. We believe that this program is critical for lifting women and their families out of poverty and is an important way to give all kids a good start in early learning.

To help tackle the unacceptable rate of poverty among Canadians living with a disability, we will launch a full review of income security programs. When it comes to employment, everyone deserves a fair shot at a good job that fits their unique abilities. A New Democrat government will continue and expand employment programs to make sure that quality employment opportunities are available to all.

For Canadians facing a serious illness, we'll make Employment Insurance work better by extending sickness benefits to 50 weeks of coverage and by creating a pilot project to allow workers with episodic disabilities to access benefits as they need them.

Finally, making sure that all Canadians can access healthy, affordable food is a cornerstone of our Canadian food strategy. A national school nutrition program will make sure that no child enters their classroom hungry. Children should always have access to healthy food and the ability to concentrate on learning. In addition, New Democrats will ensure that a reformed Nutrition North program is able to better respond to the needs of Northern families, to put an end to chronic food insecurity in the North.

We hope you will agree that the proposals above represent a very comprehensive set of policies to address child poverty and poverty more broadly. While we haven't addressed the specific questions in your extensive survey, we hope that this message and the policies above will be well received and judged to be effective. We hope you will accept our invitation to meet following this campaign to discuss your specific questions and policy proposals so that we can continue to pursue our mutual goal of eliminating child poverty, and poverty more broadly, in the next parliament. In the meantime, please accept our best wishes Campaign 2000 and our thanks for your continued advocacy.

Sincerely,

 NDP  
Jagmeet  
Singh  
In it for you

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