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New National Report on Child Poverty Shows Modest Decreases, Some Troubling Increases

TORONTO – With two weeks left before the federal election, Campaign 2000's new report, *Child Poverty by Federal Riding: The Work Ahead for Canada's New Parliament*, on child poverty across Canada shows only moderate and unbalanced reductions, and in some cases, increases in child poverty between 2015 and 2017. The Canada Child Benefit was introduced in July 2016 and fully implemented in 2017 so we can assess its maximum poverty reduction effect, which is smaller than advocates hoped for.

A new infographic tool designed in partnership with the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives and released alongside the Report, allows members of the public to scroll over ridings across the country to find out how many children are living below the poverty line in each federal riding, with related statistics included. Ridings with the highest rate of child poverty are also home to the highest proportion of Indigenous and racialized people, immigrants and lone parent led households.

"Child and family poverty is a reality in every single riding in the country. Poverty means there are too many children suffering hunger, ill health and stress beyond their years in communities across the country," says Leila Sarangi, Campaign 2000's National Coordinator. "Given Canada's wealth, no child should go to bed hungry. No parent should be forced to choose between paying rent and buying medication or miss out on work or training for lack of quality affordable childcare. With every riding affected by poverty, every candidate of every party should be talking about how they will tackle it."

The Federal Government released their first Poverty Reduction Strategy last year, and while an official poverty measure was included with the strategy, Campaign 2000's Report finds that the method does not accurately capture the levels of poverty faced by many, in particular children living in northern and Indigenous communities.

"Not only is the current state of child poverty in the country unacceptable, but the Federal Government chose a measurement that is subjective, outdated, and only measures material poverty. People are being left out," said Dr. Sid Frankel, University of Manitoba. "It has the dangerous effect of underestimating poverty in communities that need the most support and investment."



While the national poverty rate dropped from 20.9% in 2015 to 18.7% in 2017, Campaign 2000's report found that 28 ridings in seven provinces saw child poverty rates rise in the same period – nearly 5000 more children living in poverty. And where decreases of urban child poverty have occurred in some of Toronto's poorest neighbourhoods, reductions are almost flatlining in nearby Brampton. The report also indicates a trend of poverty moving to the outer suburbs, as urban housing unaffordability intensifies.

"In Toronto, 14 of our 25 federal ridings have the highest rate of child poverty. Modest decreases are not good enough," says Sarangi. "Income security measures like the CCB and investments in housing and childcare are crucial to the process of alleviating child poverty, both here and across the country. The next federal government must commit to doing more, especially partnering with local communities to develop local solutions."

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. The report can be accessed at www.campaign.2000.ca.

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Contact: Leila Sarangi, National Coordinator, Campaign 2000, 647.393.1097

Regional media spokespeople from various provinces are available to comment upon request.

