

To:

The Right Honourable Mark Carney, Prime Minister of Canada

The Honourable Members of the Cabinet

The Honourable Secretaries of State

Members of the House of Commons

**Re: Passage of Bill S-212, An Act respecting a national strategy for children and youth**

Dear Prime Minister, Ministers, Secretaries of State and Members of Parliament,

Campaign 2000: End Child and Family Poverty is a diverse, national coalition of community-based organizations which came together in response to the 1989 unanimously adopted House of Commons resolution to end child poverty by the year 2000. We conduct research, engage communities and advance evidence-based, achievable policy solutions to some of the most pressing issues related to poverty in Canada.

We write to urge the Government of Canada to champion the swift passage of Bill S-212, *A National Strategy for Children and Youth Act through the House of Commons*. The Senate has done its part. The federal government and all parties must now make this legislation a priority.

We recognize that the government is facing many urgent and competing pressures, including the economic uncertainty and rising costs created by the trade war. These challenges demand serious attention. They also make it more important, not less, to invest in children and families who are least able to absorb further hardship. Such investments are not only socially responsible, they are economically sound. Adequate incomes and robust public services support healthy development, enable parents to participate in the labour market, build strong communities and future-proof our workforce.

Campaign 2000's 2025 Report Card on Child and Family Poverty in Canada, *Investing in Tomorrow: A Future Without Poverty*, shows why, twenty-five years after the goal to eradicate child poverty, action cannot wait. Rates of child poverty rose for the third consecutive year. Child poverty has more than doubled since 2020, according to Canada's official measure, to 10.7%, or 802,000 children. According to annual tax filer data, nearly 1.4 million children, or 18.3%, lived in poverty in 2023.

Poverty is deepening and its impacts remains profoundly unequal. Families with children were living, on average, more than \$15,000 below the poverty line and 2.5 million children across the provinces lived in food insecure households. More than half of children living on First Nations reserves lived in poverty, nearly half of children in lone-parent families lived in poverty and 99% of young people under the age of 18 who did not live in families lived in poverty.

These outcomes are not inevitable. They are the result of policy choices, inadequate supports and systemic inequities. Failing to invest now carries avoidable costs, weakens productivity and in effect, drags on the economy.

We are concerned that without significant new investments, Canada is unlikely to meet its 2030 commitment to reduce poverty by 50% under Opportunity for All, Canada's Poverty Reduction Strategy.

Bill S-212 provides a practical and urgently needed framework for change. It would require the federal government to work with provinces and territories, First Nations, Inuit and Métis leaders, partners, families and children and youth themselves, to develop a coordinated national strategy with measurable objectives, an action plan and regular reporting to Parliament. This is the kind of rights-based, cross-jurisdictional leadership Canada requires on all issues related to children and youth.

We urge the Government to publicly support Bill S-212, allocate the parliamentary time needed to advance the legislation through second reading and committee, and work across party lines to secure its passage without delay.

Sincerely,

**The Campaign 2000 Steering Committee:**

Leila Sarangi, Campaign 2000: End Child and Family Poverty

Kate Kehler, Social Planning Council of Winnipeg

Chris Brillinger, Family Service Toronto

Anita Khanna, Ex Officio Campaign 2000

Mary Boyd, MacKillop Centre for Social Justice and PEI Coalition for a Poverty Eradication Strategy

Brad LaFortune, Public Interest Alberta

Brittany Lambert, UNICEF Canada

Kimberly Dreddy, Jimmy Pratt Foundation

Adrienne Montani, First Call Child and Youth Advocacy Society

Lesley Frank, Acadia University

Laurel Rothman, Ex Officio Campaign 2000

Sid Frankel, University of Manitoba

Diana Sarosi, Oxfam Canada

Martha Friendly, Childcare Resource and Research Unit

Christine Saulnier, Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives Nova Scotia

Randy Hatfield, Human Development Council of Saint John

**Endorsed by:**

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|--------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------|
| Advancement of Women Halton                            | Open Policy                                          |
| Bereaved Families of Ontario- Toronto                  | Oxfam Canada                                         |
| Canadian Arab Federation                               | PEI Coalition for a Poverty Eradication Strategy     |
| Canadian Center for Policy Alternatives                | Prosper Canada                                       |
| Canadian Paediatric Society                            | Right To Food                                        |
| Child Care Now                                         | Social Planning and Research Council of Hamilton     |
| Childcare Resource and Research Unit                   | Social Planning Toronto                              |
| Children First Canada                                  | Socialcommons.canada                                 |
| Choices For Youth                                      | South Asian Legal Clinic of Ontario                  |
| Colour of Poverty - Colour of Change                   | South Asian Women's & Immigrants Services Inc        |
| Edmonton Social Planning Council                       | The Change Lab                                       |
| Elementary Teachers' Federation of Ontario (ETFO)      | The Chinese and Southeast Asian Legal Clinic (CSALC) |
| Federation of Sisters of St. Joseph of Canada          | Toronto & York Region Labour Council                 |
| First Call Child and Youth Advocacy Society            | Toronto Community for Better Child Care              |
| Grandmothers Act to Save the Planet (GASP)             | Treetop Children's Centre                            |
| Hard Feelings Mental Health                            | Under One Sky Friendship Center                      |
| Inclusion Canada                                       | UNICEF Canada                                        |
| Income Security Advocacy Centre (ISAC)                 | West Scarborough Community Legal Services            |
| Jane/Finch Community and Family Centre                 | Women's National Housing & Homelessness Network      |
| Mazon Canada                                           | Workers' Action Centre                               |
| National Council of Women of Canada                    | Working For Change                                   |
| National Council of Youth in Care Advocates (NCYICA)   | Yukon Anti-Poverty Coalition                         |
| ÑCWC EF                                                | YWCA Canada                                          |
| OCASI - Ontario Council of Agencies Serving Immigrants |                                                      |
| Ontario Children's Advancement Coalition               |                                                      |
| Ontario Public School Boards' Association              |                                                      |