

RELIGIOUS SOCIAL ACTION COALITION OF NEWFOUNDLAND AND LABRADOR

POST OFFICE BOX 21094, ST. JOHN'S, NL, A1A 5B2

Jews, Christians, Muslims, Hindus, Sikhs and others committed to ending the injustice of poverty
www.rsacnl.com

February 2022

To All NL Members of Parliament (Liberal)

Ms. Joanne Thompson, Member of Parliament (St. John's East)

Dear Ms. Thompson:

Greetings to you. Aware that Parliament is back in session, you will be involved in much work covering many matters of concern. We, the Directors of the Religious Social Action Coalition of Newfoundland and Labrador (RSACNL), look forward to working with you as together we seek policies and procedures to serve the well-being of ALL who live in our province and country. In that regard, we raise with you one serious matter - poverty in our province and country and the urgent need for a guaranteed livable basic income.

For example,

- 67,000 people were categorized as living below the poverty line in NL (2016 census).
- Food insecurity, which reached 14.7% of all households in 2017-18, has risen in the midst of the Pandemic. (Source: Basic Income NL Report)

I am sure you would agree that poverty of this nature is totally unacceptable and is related to income shortage and insecurity.

On January 17, 2022, 43 Senators from all ten provinces, Yukon and Northwest Territories wrote a letter to Prime Minister Justin Trudeau and Deputy Prime Minister Chrystia Freeland and other Ministers encouraging them to work with PEI to launch a "demonstration project" that would allow an assessment of investing in a Guaranteed Livable Income for all below the poverty line. We would urge you, as our NL Members of Parliament, to add your support to ensure that the 2022 Budget includes financial support for PEI's request.

The Senators also applauded the proposed Canada Disability Benefit legislation, providing a basic income for those with disabilities. RSACNL adds its voice of commendation for this proposed legislation.

Measures that provide a guaranteed basic income for seniors (OAS) have had a substantial impact in reducing poverty among seniors. Once the proposed disability benefit is in place, the next logical step is a guaranteed livable basic income for ALL, so that, as Prime Minister Trudeau repeatedly has stated, we will have a Canada "where no one is left behind."

In summary, then:

- Thank you for the proposed Canada Benefit Disability legislation.
- Urge you to include support for the PEI Guaranteed Livable Basic Income “demonstration” in the 2022 budget.
- The next logical step is a guaranteed livable basic income for all in need in our country.

In his book, “Bootstraps Need Boots...”, former Senator Hugh Segal indicates that the impetus for a just solution to poverty will more than likely come from the provinces: “From there, it could spread across the country, as had been the case with universal health insurance in Saskatchewan during the 1960s and Ontario’s guaranteed annual income supplement for seniors in the mid-1970s.”

There is no need to wait for the provinces. You (Parliament, the Government of Canada) can act now.

We would welcome an opportunity to speak with you collectively and/or individually, via Zoom. We would like to know where you stand in getting the PEI “demonstration” project funded in the upcoming budget and where you stand with regard to establishing a guaranteed basic livable income for all. Please reply to: m-pardy@nf.sympatico.ca.

We offer our prayerful support for your justice leadership among us.

Marion Pardy (Very Rev. Dr.), Coordinator
Religious Social Action Coalition of Newfoundland and Labrador

Directors: Dr. Mohammed Nazir – Muslim Association of NL; Dr. Steven Wolinetz – President, Jewish Community Havura; Dr. Veeresh Gadag – Hindu Temple of NL; George H Powell – Baptist; Rami Wadhwa – NL Sikh Society; The Rev. Father Paul Lundrigan – Roman Catholic Church; Haseen Khan – Muslim Association of NL; Captain Steven Barrett – Salvation Army; The Rev. Dale Careen – Anglican Diocese of Eastern NL

Copy: The Right Honourable Justin Trudeau, P.C., M.P., Prime Minister of Canada
The Honourable Chrystia Freeland, P.C., M.P., Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance
The Honourable Carla Qualtrough, P.C., M.P., Minister of Employment, Workforce Development & Disability Inclusion
The Honourable Jean-Yves Duclos, P.C., M.P., Minister of Health
The Honourable Marc Miller, P.C., M.P., Minister of Crown-Indigenous Relations
The Honourable Patty Hajdu, P.C., M.P., Minister of Minister of Indigenous Services