

Religious Social Action Coalition Directors Meet with Minister of Finance, Siobhan Coady, January 28, 2025

The Religious Social Action Coalition (RSAC) were pleased to be invited to meet, online, with Minister of Finance and Deputy Premier, Siobhan Coady, January 28, 2025, as part of her pre-budget consultations.

RSAC Directors in attendance were: Marion Parady, Chair; Steve Wolinetz, Vice Chair; Veeresh Gadag, Treasurer; Rami Wadhwa, Director; Betty Morrissey, Director.

In relation to budget, the discussion focused on the All Party Committee Report (completed but not publicized to date); the 'pilot' on basic income for 60 – 64 year olds, and the possibility of another 'pilot' in a demographic area of our province. With President Trump's Executive Order, abolishing the Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Departments, we also raised the concern of impact on our province and country and the necessity of intentionally honouring diversity.

In addition, Minister Coady provided information on the status of the budget, to date.

From Minister Coady's questions and comments, we concluded that a budget for a guaranteed livable basic income is not forthcoming! At the same time, she was open to receiving further information from us. In addition, we have access to the Children, Seniors and Social Development Department, primarily through the Assistant Deputy Minister, Aisling Gogan (Minister is Paul Pike, with whom we met, January 2024). Before the meeting, Aisling provided us with an update on work in progress in her department: on-going simplification and higher amounts in Income Support program; Basic Income for Youth receiving Youth Services; Basic Income 'pilot for 60 – 64 year olds'. The 'approved' Minutes of the All-Party Committee re Basic Income are available online.

All of us, who attended, thought that Minister Coady received us cordially and collegially. It was obvious that she welcomed our questions and listened attentively. We in NL are privileged to have this 'easy access' to most government leaders (municipally, provincially and federally).

Submitted by: Marion Parady, Chair