

RELIGIOUS SOCIAL ACTION COALITION OF NEWFOUNDLAND AND LABRADOR

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Jews, Christians, Muslims, Hindus, Sikhs and others committed to ending the injustice of poverty
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RSAC applauds increased income supplements However, more is needed to eliminate poverty

The Religious Social Action Coalition (RSAC) is pleased that the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador has decided to increase supplements for people and families with incomes. In light of sharply increased energy and food costs, the government, like its counterparts elsewhere in Canada, could not do less.

While we endorse this measure, these increases are not sufficient to deal with the larger problem. At best, they simply restore what was before the large increase in energy and food costs. Minister of Finance Siobhan Coady indicated that 162,000 individuals and families receive income supplements. That is at least one third of our total population. We believe that the only way to eliminate poverty is to provide everyone with a **Guaranteed Livable Basic Income**.

This is needed not only to ensure that people do not grow up in poverty, but also to ensure their basic health. In its final report to government, Health Accord NL – intended to revamp our health care system – argued that a guaranteed basic income was needed to ensure better outcomes that we so badly need. In their press release, the Minister of Finance and her colleague, the Minister of Children, Seniors, and Social Development reiterated their commitment to a revamped and renewed strategy to combat poverty. This is at least as important as increases to income supplements. We know that thorough reviews take time, but changes are needed now. We urge the government to take whatever steps it can to pilot and implement new programs sooner rather than later. An important beginning would be to immediately implement the Private Members' Resolution for an all-party select committee for a guaranteed basic income, passed unanimously by the House of Assembly in November 2021.

For further information or comment, please contact Steven Wolinetz.

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