

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
www.rsacnl.com

May 2021

Premier Dr. Andrew Furey
Government of Newfoundland and Labrador

Dear Premier:

Again, as Coordinator of the Religious Social Action Coalition of Newfoundland and Labrador (a coalition of faith groups established to eliminate poverty in our province and country), I extend our congratulations and good wishes on your recent election as Premier of our Province. Your task and that of your majority government is one of challenge and potential during this extra-ordinary time and we wish you strength and wisdom as you seek the well-being of all residents of our Province.

During the provincial election, the Religious Social Action Coalition (RSAC) contacted the vast majority of candidates seeking election, asking for their pledge, if elected, to make binding the PMR concerning a guaranteed basic income passed unanimously by the House of Assembly on October 28, 2020. Candidates from all 3 Parties and one Independent indicated their support, yourself included. We were heartened by the response.

We sincerely hope that you will commence this action of establishing an all-party Select Committee on basic income immediately. You have much support for this action, given that the PMR was passed unanimously. I also noted the particular references to poverty in **The Big Reset; The Report of the Premier's Economic Recovery Team**, especially pages 26 – 33, 174 – 180. Of concern are statements that 11.2 per cent of our Newfoundland and Labrador population live in poverty (5th in Canada) and that extreme poverty and homelessness are increasing (pgs. 26, 27). Of hope is the statement, "Long term economic growth requires addressing poverty and social exclusion and ensuring a strong social safety net." (p.174). I was further heartened that one of the resources in the Team's bibliography is: **Basic Income for Canadians: The Key to a Healthier, Happier, More Secure Life For All.** (Evelyn Forget. Forget is a leading authority on basic income in Canada). In addition, a guaranteed basic income received an overwhelming vote of 77% at the Federal Liberal Convention, April 9th and 10th. Thus, your All Party Select Committee can begin their deliberations with a positive beginning.

We believe that addressing poverty, in this intentional way, is a goal that must be pursued despite the difficult fiscal situation and pandemic in which the Province finds itself. **The Big Reset** team would appear to be of a similar perspective. We look forward to your reply by way of email (m-pardy@nf.sympatico.ca). Please know that prayers from our multi-faith faith communities are with you and your government as you strive to serve all residents of our Province, to ensure “fairness and income security for all”.

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 – Past President, Jewish Community Havura; Dr. Veeresh Gadag – Hindu Temple of NL; The Rev. David Burrows – Anglican Parish of the Ascension, Mount Pearl; George H. Powell – West End 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.