

October 1, 2020

Right Honourable Justin Trudeau, P.C., M.P.
Prime Minister of Canada
Langevin Block
Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0A2



Dear Prime Minister:

Re: Speech from the Throne: Basic Income for Canadians Addresses the Increasing Class Divide Undermining Core Canadian Values

We're Together Ending Poverty (WTEP) is heartened by many aspects of the recent Speech from the Throne. This includes following through on commitments to Indigenous Peoples by expediting Indigenous health legislation, accelerating a National Action Plan on MMIWG, and a 10-year commitment to closing the infrastructure gap including the basic human right to clean drinking water. Thank you!

Important steps to address economic insecurity for racialized and marginalized Canadians coming closer to the transformative changes include:

- the Black Entrepreneurship Program
- closing the gaps in services for Indigenous communities,
- robust supplier diversity initiative procurement. Thank you!

However, it should not take the COVID-19 pandemic to demonstrate that Canadians with disabilities are disproportionately impacted by lack of access and barriers to resources and adequate care. Yes, these are long-standing challenges. Bringing a new Canadian Disability Benefit modelled after the senior GIS; ensuring Canadians with disabilities can find meaningful employment; and an improved process to determine eligibility for disability programs and benefits is long overdue. Thank you! We encourage the government to create the Canadian Disability Benefit based on principles of basic income including adequacy for life basics and no detrimental impact on other benefits such as support for ability aids and health professionals not covered by the Canadian Health Act.

Additional positive changes include supporting net zero emissions with Alberta's talented natural resources and energy workers.

WTEP members are keen to learn next steps for budgeting, policy and regulatory changes that support the 2020 Throne Speech promises.

In a heartbeat, Canadians stepped up to fight a disease that threatens the wellness of our society and economy. In a heartbeat, Canada could immediately step lift people out of poverty, people who are living in one of the richest countries in the world and struggling to meet their basic needs. It is time to take action on broad economic justice reforms. As former Senator Hugh Segal said, "The notion that we can't afford it is like saying we're not prepared to fight a disease which destroys the fibre of our society." Canada is prepared to respond and we cannot afford not to.

Canada needs a guaranteed basic income now. The public health crisis has exacerbated and accelerated many gaps in the social support system, making the case for a basic income even stronger. The magnitude of the pandemic makes it impossible to return to the old normal. We either learn from this experience and create a better, new normal, or daily life will get immensely worse for many people. Canada's emergency measures must transition into a universal basic income to recover and rebuild that better, new normal. It is time to make a basic income a permanent program in Alberta and all of Canada.

Build a happier, healthier, more secure Canada for everyone.

We're Together Ending Poverty (WTEP) is a Calgary-based grassroots organization taking action on the root causes of poverty that impact women and non-binary.

Your constituents,

We're Together Ending Poverty

cc. Honourable Chrystia Freeland, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance
Honourable Ahmed Hussen, Minister of Family, Children and Social Development
Honourable Carla Qualtrough, Minister of Employment, Workforce Development and Disability Inclusion
Honourable Maryam Monsef, Minister for Women and Gender Equality and Rural Development