



Haliburton County - City of Kawartha Lakes Roundtable for Ending Poverty
PO Box 129, 50 Colborne St., Fenelon Falls ON K0M 1N0 705-887-3535 ext. 27

March 23, 2021

Re: Bill C-273- A National Strategy for Guaranteed Basic Income

Dear Mayor Letham,

We are writing to you in support of Bill C-273, an Act to establish a national strategy for a guaranteed basic income in Canada. We are writing on behalf of the Haliburton County-City of Kawartha Lakes Roundtable for Ending Poverty, a group bringing together representatives from agencies in social services, health care, municipal government and individuals committed to working with all levels of government to address ending poverty. Our advocacy is grounded in research and evidence-based policy, guided by the positions espoused by organizations such as the World Health Organization, Universal Basic Income (UBI) Works, and The Canadian Centre for Economic Analysis (CANCEA) and their report, Potential Economic Impacts and Reach of Basic Income Programs in Canada, November 2020 (in which portions of this analysis are based on Statistics Canada's Social Policy Simulation Database and Model).

The fundamental principle guiding our work is that poverty is not solely an individual's responsibility; it is systemically rooted in inadequate and insecure income, and the inability to meet the basic needs of life (i.e. housing, clothing, and food).

This problem has unquestionably become worse with the COVID-19 pandemic. According to a February 2020 Statistics Canada report, there were approximately 3.2 million Canadians living below Canada's Official Poverty Line – people who do not have enough money to pay rent, buy clothing or put food on their tables. At 13.1%, 9,625 of Kawartha Lakes households are considered low-income. This includes 16.5% (2,000) of children 0-17 years of age, 13.2% (5,710) of adults 18-64 and 10.7% (1,915) of adults 65 and older.

In addition to deteriorated circumstances for many people, now even more Canadians are experiencing increased economic impacts resulting from widespread work stoppages and job losses associated with the pandemic.

Basic income has been explored in numerous government reports and studies for over a half-century in Canada. Canada already has a modest basic income program in place for people

with children: the Canada Child Benefit. In 2020, the idea of a universal income guarantee has been thrust into the spotlight by the COVID-19 pandemic and the programs that have been created to provide economic relief to Canadians.

We urge you and City of Kawartha Lakes Council to support Bill C-273 by writing a letter of support to our local MP, Jamie Schmale and Federal Minister of Finance, Chrystia Freeland. As described by UBI works “the Act would provide much-needed answers about how a guaranteed Basic Income could work in partnership with the provinces; what effect it would have on the efficiency of government; how it could support entrepreneurship and job creation in a new economy; how it would impact labour market participation and civic action; and how it would impact recipients and their communities at large.

The economic recovery from COVID-19 may be the most asymmetric in history, with the bottom 60% of Canadians representing the bulk of lost income, while higher-income workers have largely already recovered. Meanwhile, 4 in 10 recent business closures and layoffs may be permanent. Many will never recover their income, as the adoption of job-displacing technology continues to accelerate. The time to look at how to improve our social safety net in order to better serve Canadians is now.

A national Basic Income in Canada could grow our economy more than it costs, creating hundreds of thousands of jobs, and supporting Canadian businesses, while ending poverty and growing the middle class. Bill C-273 sets out a path for our government to make this a reality.”¹

Please support Bill C-273. The insight it would provide will enable us to build a more resilient Canadian economy that leaves us all better off.

Sincerely,



Marina Hodson, Executive Director
Kawartha North Family Health Team



Marg Cox, Executive Director
Point in Time Centre for Children Youth & Parents

And

Co-Chairs

Haliburton County - City of Kawartha Lakes Roundtable for Ending Poverty

1. Canada's First Basic Income Bill C-273 - Add Your Voice and Tell Your MP to Support the Bill Today (ubiworks.ca).