

May 5, 2020

The Right Honourable Justin Trudeau, P.C., M.P.
Prime Minister of Canada
House of Commons
Ottawa, Ontario
Canada
K1A 0A6

The Honourable Chrystia Freeland, P.C., M.P.
Deputy Prime Minister
House of Commons
Ottawa, Ontario
Canada
K1A 0A6

The Honourable Bardish Chagger, P.C., M.P.
Minister of Diversity and Inclusion and Youth
House of Commons
Ottawa, Ontario
Canada
K1A 0A6

The Honourable Bill Morneau, P.C., M.P.
Minister of Finance
House of Commons
Ottawa, Ontario
Canada
K1A 0A6

Subject: Youth Voice Amidst COVID-19 Pandemic – Guaranteed Livable Income

Dear Prime Minister, Deputy Prime Minister, Minister Chagger and Minister Morneau:

As young people in the midst of education or in the beginning stages of our careers, we face an unprecedented situation. Systemic problems like climate change, income inequality, joblessness and unemployment remain pressing, and the global COVID-19 pandemic will change societal norms as we know them. Now more than ever, we need reforms that will create a more equitable, just, and fair society where people - including youth - can not only survive, but thrive.

Having introduced Canada's first-ever national youth policy, Minister of Youth, youth council to the Prime Minister, and Canada Service Corps-a program that fosters national youth volunteer service, this government has shown an unparalleled commitment to the power and potential of this country's young people. At the same time, we are encouraged by the climate of collaboration, optimism, and sincerity that has been fostered by all levels of government in the context of COVID-19. For these reasons, we thank you.

At the same time, critical challenges remain. While we have seen the introduction of the Canada Emergency Response Benefit (CERB) as a crucial tool to get money in the pockets of those in need, across the country, youth, informal or low-income workers, social assistance recipients, and those who are unemployed continue to find themselves excluded. Moreover, while COVID-19 has made problems of income insecurity, unemployment, and poverty more pronounced, these aren't new issues: 2019 research from [MNP Consumer Debt Index](#) found that nearly half of Canadians reported being \$200 or less away from bankruptcy at the end of each month. Further, a Canadian [Centre for Policy Alternatives](#) report indicated that as of 2016, nearly 50% of working tenant households have less than a month's income saved, and nearly 25% have less than a week's income. Today's youth in Canada have struggled with unemployment, student debt, and the ability to save for a home or retirement - among other challenges - pre-pandemic, and we will continue to do so after should we not see serious policy changes.

To this end, we echo the calls of the members of the Senate of Canada in their April 21st, 2020 letter, requesting that Ministers work to restructure CERB with a view to ensuring greater social and economic equity for not only youth, but all Canadians. Each new initiative - including the new measures for students introduced on April 22nd - takes time to craft and implement, leaving those most in need further vulnerable. The patchwork of programs we're seeing fosters inefficiency for public servants, confusion for recipients, and persistent vulnerability for those who are most in need. For these reasons, we support the Senators' call to restructure CERB as a crisis minimum income.

In the longer-term, it is our hope that this government will take seriously Senators' call to craft social and economic reforms that develop a positive legacy for all Canadians, in particular by exploring the pursuit of a guaranteed livable income in Canada. Exploring this type of response is both urgent and welcomed by us and many other individuals and organizations across Canada, and we are keen to support this process through providing a youth perspective. This is a made-in-Canada, evidence-based, and compassionate solution, with [data](#) showing that it would not only be feasible, but with the potential to produce significant positive outcomes in so many facets of Canadians' lives.

While this is a complex and dynamic issue, we as youth recognize the need to engage in dialogue and action during this time of social change. We understand it is crucial for young Canadians to tackle this topic alongside fellow youth, student groups, and youth-focused organizations. We can come out of this crisis as a more fair and equitable society, with more certainty in our futures than ever. That's why we - the following undersigned individuals and organizations, representing young people from coast to coast to coast - add our voice to parliamentarians from all parties, calling to bridge the ideological divide and urging you to make the recent solution proposed by members of the Senate of Canada a reality.

Sincerely,

Canadian Council of Young Feminists - Senator McPhedran's Youth Advisory
Basic Income Canada Youth Network, with and on behalf of:

1. Basic Income Canada Network/Réseau canadien pour le revenu garanti - *National*
2. Basic Income Hamilton - *Ontario*
3. Basic Income London - *Ontario*
4. Basic Income Manitoba - *Manitoba*
5. Basic Income Nova Scotia - *Nova Scotia*

6. Basic Income Peterborough Network (BIPN) - *Ontario*
7. Basic Income Waterloo Region (BIWR) - *Ontario*
8. Canadian Coalition for Global Health Research - Students and Young Professionals Network (SYPN) - *National*
9. Canadian Council for Refugees Youth Network/Réseau des jeunes Conseil Canadien pour les réfugiés - *National*
10. Canadian Federation of Students - *National*
11. Choices for Youth - *Newfoundland & Labrador*
12. Climate Justice Ottawa
13. Coalition Canada: BIG/RdB Actions - *National*
14. Durham Food Policy Council - *Ontario*
15. Engineers Without Borders Canada - *National*
16. Greater Fredericton Social Innovation - *New Brunswick*
17. HAMSMaRT - *Ontario*
18. Halton Poverty Roundtable - *Ontario*
19. Hamilton Roundtable for Poverty Reduction - *Ontario*
20. Income Security Peterborough - *Ontario*
21. Institute for International Women's Rights - *Manitoba - Manitoba*
22. Keeping Six - *Ontario*
23. Kingston Action Group for a Basic Income Guarantee - *Ontario*
24. La Maison de Jonathan - *Quebec*
25. Manitoba Youth for Climate Action - *Manitoba*
26. Millennial Womxn in Policy - *National*
27. Ontario Basic Income Network - *Ontario*
28. Ontario Council for International Cooperation - *Ontario*
29. P.E.E.R.S. Alliance - *Prince Edward Island*
30. PEI Working Group for a Livable Income/C-BIG PEI - *Prince Edward Island*
31. Peterborough Youth Empowerment Committee - *Ontario*
32. Social Planning and Research Council of Hamilton - *Ontario*
33. St. Thomas University Students' Union - *New Brunswick*
34. Toronto Youth Food Policy Council - *Ontario*
35. UBI Works - *National*
36. Voices: Manitoba's Youth in Care Network - *Manitoba*
37. Volunteer Greater Fredericton - *New Brunswick*
38. Women's March Ottawa - *Ontario*
39. Young Greens of Prince Edward Island - *Prince Edward Island*
40. Youth Agencies Alliance (YAA - Winnipeg) - *Manitoba*
41. Youth Climate Lab - *National*
42. YWCA Canada - *National*
43. YWCA Halifax - *Nova Scotia*

As individuals:

1. Dr. Brenda Beagan, Professor, School of Occupational Therapy, Dalhousie University
2. Dr. Elaine Power, School of Kinesiology & Health Studies and Department of Gender Studies, Queen's University
3. Dr. Elizabeth (Mandy) Kay-Raining Bird, Professor, School of Communication Sciences and Disorders, Dalhousie University
4. Dr. Evelyn L. Forget, Professor, Faculty of Health Sciences, University of Manitoba
5. Dr. Haideh Moghissi, Emerita Professor, York University
6. Dr. James P. Mulvale, Faculty of Social Work, University of Manitoba

7. Dr. Jennifer Brady, Assistant Professor, Department of Applied Human Nutrition, Mount Saint Vincent University, Halifax, Nova Scotia
8. Dr. John Holmes, Professor Emeritus, Department of Geography and Planning, Queen's University
9. Dr. Karen Foster, Associate Professor, Sociology and Social Anthropology, Canada Research Chair (Tier II) in Sustainable Rural Futures for Atlantic Canada, Director, Rural Futures Research Centre, Dalhousie University
10. Dr. Lorna A. Turnbull, Professor, Faculty of Law, Robson Hall, University of Manitoba
11. Dr. Margaret Little, Professor, Gender Studies/ Political Studies, Queen's University
12. Dr. Marguerite Van Die professor emerita History and Religion, Queen's University Kingston
13. Dr. Mary Valentich, Professor Emerita, Faculty of Social Work, University of Calgary
14. Dr. Patricia Ballamingie, Professor, Department of Geography & Environmental Studies/Institute of Political Economy, Carleton University
15. Dr. Patricia L. Cleave, SLP-Reg, Professor, School of Communication Sciences and Disorders, Dalhousie University
16. Dr. Shauna MacKinnon, Associate Professor and Chair, Department of Urban and Inner City Studies, University of Winnipeg
17. Dr. Tracy Smith-Carrier, King's University College at Western University
18. Dr. Wayne Lewchuk, Professor Emeritus, McMaster University
19. Dr. William H. Cooper, Professor Emeritus, Smith School of Business, Queen's University
20. Andrea Loken, President, Teachers' Bargaining Unit of OSSTF Limestone District 27
21. Graham Riches, Emeritus Professor of Social Work, University of British Columbia
22. Jamie Swift, Adjunct Professor, Smith School of Business, Queen's University
23. John D. Whyte, Professor Emeritus, Faculty of Law, Queen's University & Professor Emeritus, Politics and International Studies, University of Regina
24. Hugh Tye, Executive Director / Directeur general, Hamilton Community Legal Clinic/Clinique juridique communautaire de Hamilton
25. Lynn McIntyre MD, Professor Emerita of Community Health Sciences, Cumming School of Medicine, University of Calgary
26. Members, Youth Policy-Makers Hub, Ontario Council for International Cooperation
27. Pierre Stevens (ret'd), Senior Instructor, Department of Mathematics and Statistics, Dalhousie University
28. Toni Pickard, Queen's Faculty of Law (ret'd)
29. Virginia Bartley, Faculty of Law, Queen's University (ret'd)