



## NIAGARA POVERTY REDUCTION NETWORK

June 14<sup>th</sup> , 2017

### **Niagara residents urge the federal government to follow through on promises for a Basic Income Guarantee**

As the Ontario's Basic Income Pilot Project rolls out of the next few months, residents of Niagara want to continue to keep the pressure on the federal government to take action to implement this type of policy nationwide.

The Niagara Poverty Reduction Network's (NPRN) Basic Income Guarantee Task Group has carried out a postcard campaign which aimed to not only educate the public about the idea of Basic Income Guarantee (BIG), but also garner support for implementing this type of policy nationwide.

There was overwhelming support with nearly 1000 signed postcards collected from residents across the region. Last week, these postcards were sent to the Federal Minister of Families, Children and Social Development, Honourable Jean-Yves Duclos, to urge the government to take immediate action.

Glen Walker Chair of the NPRN stated "The Network's request not only includes initiating a BIG program for all Canadians, but also providing the necessary resources to the provinces or regions which have taken the initiative to explore BIG on their own."

The Federal Liberal Government included investigating a BIG in their 2015 election platform and passed the Priority Resolution "to prioritize implementation of a Basic Income" at the Federal Liberal Biennial Convention in 2016. Hopes of many poverty advocates were dashed when Federal Finance Minister Bill Morneau recently indicated that a BIG is no longer being considered as the government would rather focus on getting "people to be engaged in the workforce".

Walker stated "Although initiatives to increase workforce participation are crucial, they may not be a feasible sole solution to poverty at this point due to automation."

With the age of automation there has been a steady rise in precarious employment and job loss, with estimates indicating the elimination of 8.3% to 41% of Canadian Jobs. Many individuals see BIG as an opportunity to create a social security net for all Canadians, ensuring people are able to afford their basic needs regardless of the turbulent job market. This would prevent people from having to make challenging financial decisions such as whether to pay the electricity bill or book a much needed visit to the dentist.

NPRN is asking the federal government to follow through on their promise of including a BIG into our social services support network. For more information please check out [www.wipeoutpoverty.ca](http://www.wipeoutpoverty.ca) .

- 30 -

*The Niagara Poverty Reduction Network consists of 30+ organizations – health and social service agencies, boards of education, faith-based groups, the business community, regional government, and individuals who live in poverty – working collectively to reduce poverty in Niagara through information sharing, changing attitudes, and compelling Niagara citizens to take action. For more information on the NPRN, or to get involved, visit their website at [www.wipeoutpoverty.ca](http://www.wipeoutpoverty.ca)*

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