



We call on the federal government to ***Set a Course for #DignityForAll*** by creating laws that:

1. Set strong poverty reduction targets and timelines to eradicate poverty once and for all;
2. Establish a plan to meet measurable targets and timelines; and
3. Reinstatement of the National Council of Welfare and establish a National Commissioner to ensure accountability and representation.

Canada can't wait, and this government's term is running out! Let's make sure the gains made thus far are not lost; let's ***Set a Course for #DignityForAll*** by passing this legislation by October 2019!

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1. Set strong poverty reduction targets and timelines to end poverty once and for all.

1 in 7 people in Canada live below the poverty line. That is 13.9% or 4.8 million people.¹ But as Dignity for All's [Living in the Gap](#) report shows, many others living above the poverty line can't afford even the most basic essentials. What's more, poverty affects people differently based on race, gender, disability/ability, Indigenous status, and other factors.

In a country as wealthy as Canada, a country that claims to value diversity, equality, and the dignity of all people, this is unacceptable.

We are asking MPs of all political parties to support the legislation of poverty reduction targets and timelines that are:

- ambitious, with a view to eventually eradicating poverty;
- measurable, with concrete benchmarks tied to specific indicators;
- set within a timeframe that keeps governments accountable within their mandates; and
- responsive to emerging data and contexts.

2. Establish a plan to meet measurable poverty reduction targets and timelines.

Since 2009, Dignity for All has been calling for a rights-based, comprehensive national anti-poverty plan. Now, the federal government has committed to release their Poverty Reduction Strategy in 2018. We have been told that they will be setting poverty reduction targets and timelines based on selected measures of poverty and that other indicators will be monitored. For these targets and timelines to be meaningful, however, they will need lasting power and funding.

We are asking MPs of all political parties to support the legislation of a plan that will keep governments accountable to poverty reduction targets and timelines.

¹ Source: Statistics Canada. Table 111-0015 – Family Characteristics Low Income Measures (LIM) by family type and family composition, annual. Low Income Measure (After-Tax) 2015 income year.

This plan should include:

- a schedule of Government actions to be implemented;
- the organizations and departments responsible for implementing Government actions;
- data to be collected and analysed by Statistics Canada; and
- a process for reviewing and revising the Strategy informed by quantitative data and the input of people with lived experience of poverty.

3. Reinstate the National Council of Welfare and establish a National Commissioner to ensure accountability and representation.

This will be the federal government's first attempt at a national poverty reduction plan. We're encouraged by the progress this shows, but we know there is still a long road to travel. Governments must be held accountable to the ongoing work of identifying and correcting the systemic causes of poverty and social exclusion in Canada.

From 1969 to 2012, the National Council of Welfare (NCW) served as an arms length advisory group to the federal government on poverty-related issues. Comprised of members from across the country, the NCW created opportunities for people experiencing poverty to have their voices heard in national decision-making processes. The NCW also compiled welfare and poverty statistics and created fact-based social policy resources. Unfortunately, the NCW was cut by the Harper government in 2012. No comparable organization currently exists, as civil society groups do not have the resources, access, or authority to carry out the NCW's important mandate.

We need all our elected representatives and government departments engaged. We need the public engaged, too. ***We are asking MPs of all political parties to support legislation to reinstate the National Council of Welfare to:***

- be representative of the people the Poverty Reduction Strategy seeks to impact the most, that is, people with lived experience of poverty, including racialized groups, Indigenous peoples, women, newcomers to Canada, people living with disabilities, and other groups over-represented in poverty and precarity in Canada;
- conduct research on the incidence and experience of poverty in Canada and the impact of Government policies through data analysis and public consultation;
- report annually to parliament and to the public on its research and recommendations; and
- receive adequate funding to fulfil its mandate.

To further champion the work of the National Council of Welfare, ***we are asking MPs of all political parties to support legislation to establish a Commissioner who will:***

- work with the National Council to develop a monitoring system to evaluate and revise the Poverty Reduction Strategy and other federal policies;
- submit the reports of the National Council to parliament;
- collaborate with other Commissioners, Advisory Councils, Parliamentary Committees, and Cabinet Ministers to coordinate cross-departmental research, analysis, and policy recommendations that promote the dignity of all people in Canada; and
- engage in public education about poverty in Canada.

Thank you for your support! Together, we can ***Set a Course for #DignityForAll!***