April 9, 2021

Dear Prime Minister,

Because of COVID-19, Canada has an excellent opportunity to rethink how we support one

another through social programs to ensure all Canadians can live with dignity and security. Our

government's swift response to implement universal programs to mitigate Covid’s economic

impact allowed Canadian residents to meet their basic needs and protected those who saw their

income disappear. This compassionate and universal response should become our national

standard.

We urge your government to include a sustained, universally available guaranteed livable income

component to the post-COVID-19 response plans to protect our individual residents, our

economy and our shared way of life.

Specifically, we call on the government to:

* evaluate and overhaul the complicated patchwork of existing programs;
* develop guaranteed livable income programs in consultation with organizations with

anti-poverty expertise, and;

* implement creative solutions to maximize social engagement and minimize barriers for those

with lived experience, and;

* pay particular attention to our most vulnerable communities including those living with

disabilities, new immigrants, and racialized people, particularly those in the far north and

Indigenous people living on reservations. Improving the economic prospects of those who

live with poverty will have a positive ripple effect in our economy and our society.

We know poverty disproportionately affects children, women and racialized and marginalized

communities including those with disabilities. In 2018, 8 percent of all children, and 1 in 4 children

living in families with single mothers, were living in poverty. The statistics are far worse for

Indigenous communities. The Assembly of First Nations reported in 2019 the following statistics

for children living in poverty: 47% of Status First Nation (53% for those living on reserve and 41%

for those living off reserve); 25% of Inuit children; 22% of Métis children; and 32% of non-status

First Nations children.

We believe that all Canadian residents, regardless of age, gender, ability or race, deserve to

live with dignity. In our affluent country, no one should be forced to make choices

between adequate housing, nutritious food or medical needs.

Sincerely,

c.c. Hon Chrystia Freeland, Minister of Finance

Hon Anita Vandenbeld, Member for Ottawa-West Nepean

Hon Annamie Paul, Leader of Green Party

Hon Jagmeet Singh, leader of the NDP