

## DRAFT LETTER

The Honourable Doug Ford  
Premier of Ontario  
Ontario Premier's Office  
Queen's Park, Legislative Building  
Toronto, ON M7A 1A1

The Honourable Sylvia Jones  
Deputy Premier and Minister of Health  
Ministry of Health  
777 Bay Street, College Park, 5<sup>th</sup> floor  
Toronto ON M7A 2J3

The Honourable Michael Parsa  
Minister of Children, Community and Social Services  
Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services – Central Region  
6733 Mississauga Road #200  
Mississauga, ON L5N 6L5

Dear Premier Ford, Deputy Premier and Minister Jones and Minister Parsa:

### **Re: Basic Income for Income Security**

On behalf of the City of Stratford Councillors, we are writing to convey our strong support for the call to institute a Basic Income program for all Ontarians.

The impact of low income on health has been well documented. Substantial and robust evidence confirms a direct link between socioeconomic status and health status - people in the lowest socioeconomic groups carry the greatest burden of illness.<sup>1</sup>

The need for a basic income for working age adults has become more urgent in light of the current global pandemic.<sup>2</sup> In addition, hundreds of thousands of workers are trying to survive with reduced hours or on care-giving or sick leave benefits. Trends towards precarious and low wage work may be exacerbated as inflation impacts our economy and employers aim to cut costs.<sup>3</sup>

Income is arguably the most significant social determinant of health. People with limited access to income are often more socially isolated, experience more stress, have poorer mental and physical health and fewer opportunities for early childhood development

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/health-promotion/population-health/what-determines-health/what-makes-canadians-healthy-unhealthy.html>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/daily-quotidien/230106/dq230106a-eng.htm>

<sup>3</sup> [https://d3n8a8pro7vhmx.cloudfront.net/obin/pages/142/attachments/original/1592339040/REPORT\\_-\\_Case\\_for\\_Basic\\_Income\\_for\\_Work\\_final.pdf?1592339040](https://d3n8a8pro7vhmx.cloudfront.net/obin/pages/142/attachments/original/1592339040/REPORT_-_Case_for_Basic_Income_for_Work_final.pdf?1592339040)

and post-secondary education. They also often have inadequate housing, more exposure to environmental pollutants and are unable to access nutritious or adequate food.<sup>4</sup> This reality has been visibly exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic.<sup>5</sup> Basic income is a policy approach where the government guarantees every individual a livable income regardless of their employment status.<sup>6</sup>

Around the world, basic income is becoming recognized as an effective way to support important societal goals, including the reduction and elimination of poverty and economic insecurity; the narrowing of extreme income and wealth inequalities; improving health, and supporting democratic engagement.<sup>7</sup> Basic income, as part of a robust social safety net, has the potential to address these realities as well as associated health equity goals by mitigating the impact of the most significant social determinants of health.<sup>8</sup>

Examples of Canadian evidence that demonstrate the positive impact of basic income programs include the Old Age Security and Guaranteed Income Supplement delivered to seniors through Canada's public pension system and the Canada Child Benefit delivered to lower income families with children.

A recent [report](#) from Ontario Basic Income Network notes that while not a panacea, basic income is an important tool for placing human well-being above all else – and for revaluing work, both paid and unpaid. A basic income can establish a socio-economic floor beneath which no Ontarians will fall. There is an abundance of substantiated data about basic income and its significant and positive impact on the overall health and well-being of individuals and families, our neighbourhoods and communities, and our economy and society at large.<sup>9</sup>

Our council encourages your government to take swift and immediate action on a Basic Income program as a long-term response to the problems of income insecurity as well as a response to the economic impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Sincerely,

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<sup>4</sup> <http://evidencenetwork.ca/background-the-impact-of-poverty-on-health/>

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.publichealthontario.ca/-/media/documents/ncov/covid-wwksf/2020/05/what-we-know-social-determinants-health.pdf?la=en>

<sup>6</sup> <https://basicincomecanada.org/what-is-basic-income/>

<sup>7</sup> <https://news.un.org/en/story/2020/05/1063312#:~:text=Senior%20UN%20official%20calls%20for%20universal%20basic%20income%20to%20tackle%20growing%20inequality,-6%20May%202020&text=The%20COVID%2D19%20pandemic%20is,huge%20numbers%20of%20people%20worldwide.>

<sup>8</sup> <https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/health-promotion/population-health/what-determines-health.html>

<sup>9</sup> [https://d3n8a8pro7vhm.cloudfront.net/obin/pages/142/attachments/original/1592339040/REPORT\\_-\\_Case\\_for\\_Basic\\_Income\\_for\\_Work\\_final.pdf?1592339040](https://d3n8a8pro7vhm.cloudfront.net/obin/pages/142/attachments/original/1592339040/REPORT_-_Case_for_Basic_Income_for_Work_final.pdf?1592339040)