

TOPIC: LIVING INCOME PROGRAM

SAMPLE LETTER TO POLITICIANS

To:

- MP Marco Mendicino, marco.mendicino@parl.gc.ca
- MPP Robin Martin, robin.martin@pc.ola.org
- Mayor John Tory, mayor_tory@toronto.ca
- City Councillor Mike Colle, councillor_colle8@toronto.ca

The coronavirus has laid bare the flaws in our social safety net. It has shown the perilous position of many people living 'pay-cheque to pay-cheque,' and highlighted the challenges many face having to hold several part-time jobs to make up a total workload.

Fortunately, I believe the virus has also made many people recognize that 'we are all in this together,' and we have developed a greater sense of community. So, I believe the time is now ripe to move forward in two bold new directions.

1- A **Living Income Program** (LIP). The coronavirus has sort of resurrected the Basic Income idea, in the form of the CERB. But my LIP extends the documented benefits of a Basic Income to properly reflect **a decent standard of living in each community**. Minimum wage levels barely cover rent in Toronto (a full year at \$14/hr produces only \$25,000/yr). The LIP should be based on a *living income*, which may be close to \$40,000/yr in Toronto (needs ongoing analysis for each community). Administered through the income tax system (like the GIS), the LIP would allow people to report an income drop at any time with payments starting after a 6-month waiting period (to discourage living pay-cheque to pay-cheque).

2 - **Standards for people hiring contract or part-time workers.** Contract and part-time work should only be used to deal with the variations in a firm's business, not as a way to avoid having to pay benefits. Firms should:

- only be allowed a limited fraction of their workload to be carried by contract/part-timer workers; and
- provide a core benefit program for all workers (full-time, part-time or contract), or demonstrate that they are increasing pay so that such costs can be borne by workers.

I believe changes like these are long overdue for a society that includes everyone equally.

Sincerely,

[Your name and address]