

December 12, 2022

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau, Prime Minister of Canada  
Hon. Chrystia Freeland, Minister of Finance  
Hon. Carla Qualtrough, Minister of Employment, Workforce Development, Disability Inclusion  
Hon. Karina Gould, Minister of Families, Children and Social Development

### *Joint Community and Labour Statement on Employment Insurance (EI) Reform*

Ministers, we are writing on behalf of the Inter-provincial EI Working Group to call for urgent action on reforms to Canada's EI social insurance system. We need to restore its role as an automatic economic stabilizer and ensure we have an EI system that works for workers.

Over 80 years ago workers joined an On to Ottawa Trek to demand, among other reforms, a social insurance system that would provide income maintenance during periods of unemployment. In the decades since the 1940 UI Act, the system has played a critical role in the health of the larger economy as well as individuals and their families. A 1990s federal study found that EI was '*the single most powerful automatic stabilizer*' reducing both GDP and job losses by up to 14% during recessions. But much of that earlier capacity has been lost after repeated cutbacks and only 40% of the unemployed receive EI at any given time.

Your government has repeatedly promised to deliver '*EI for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*' and provide income security for workers in a changing labour market. In election platforms you promised '*changes to the program that ensure more Canadian workers particularly those in more insecure work can get access to the benefits they need.*' The Minister responsible for EI was mandated to consult and introduce legislation. **We are still waiting.**

Ministers, there are economic storms ahead and for many workers, a difficult winter. We call for immediate action and your attention to these community and labour priorities:

1. **Extend temporary EI measures as a bridge** until permanent improvements take effect.
2. **Expand access**
  - Set a universal 360-hour (12-week) qualifying rule for Regular and Special Benefits
  - Provide up to 50 weeks of Regular EI
  - End harsh disqualification rules that leave many vulnerable workers without EI access
  - Extend EI access to all migrant workers
  - Ensure misclassified self-employed workers have access to EI
  - Extend the benefit period for combined Regular and Special EI (parental, etc)
  - Restore temporary flexibilities (banked hours, no deduction of separation pay, etc.)
  - Provide EI income benefits for workers so long as they are in approved training.
3. **Improve benefits**
  - Substantially increase the 55% benefit rate
  - Set a reasonable minimum benefit.
4. **Restore annual government contributions to EI** to help pay for improvements and to ensure EI acts as an effective automatic economic stabilizer especially at times of crisis.

Thank you for considering our position. We look forward to early action on EI reforms.

*On behalf of the Inter-provincial EI Working Group and the following signatories:*

*Aboriginal Council of Winnipeg  
Access Alliance Multicultural Health and Community Services  
ACORN-Canada  
Action Canada for Sexual Health and Rights  
Action Populaire Rimouski-Neigette  
Action-Chômage Côte-Nord  
Advancement of Women Halton  
Alberta Federation of Labour  
Atkinson Foundation  
Barbra Schlifer Commemorative Clinic  
Battered Women's Support Services (BWSS) Vancouver  
BC Employment Standards Coalition  
BC Federation of Labour  
BC General Employees' Union (BCGEU)  
Campaign 2000: End Child & Family Poverty  
Canada Employment and Immigration Union (CEIU)  
Canada Without Poverty  
Canadian Arab Foundation (CAF)  
Canadian Centre for Gender and Sexual Diversity  
Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives  
Canadian Council of Muslim Women (CCMW)  
Canadian Federation of Nurses Unions (CFNU)  
Canadian Feminist Alliance for International Action (FAFIA)  
Canadian Labour Congress  
Canadian Union of Postal Workers (CUPW)  
Canadian Union of Public Employees / Syndicat canadien de la fonction publique  
CBTU (Coalition of Black Trade Unionists)  
Centre for Future Work, Vancouver BC  
Child Care Now (Child Advocacy Association of Canada)  
Childcare Resource and Research Unit (C.R.R.U)  
Chinese and Southeast Asian Legal Clinic (CSALC)  
Chinese Canadian National Council for Social Justice  
Citizens for Public Justice  
Colour of Poverty – Colour of Change  
Community Advocacy & Legal Centre (CALC)  
Community Legal Assistance Society (CLAS BC)  
Community Legal Clinic - Brant, Haldimand, Norfolk  
Conseil central du Bas-Saint-Laurent CSN  
Council of Agencies Serving South Asians (CASSA)*

*CUPE 1190, NB*  
*Daily Bread Food Bank*  
*Decent Work and Health Network*  
*Dignidad Migrante Society*  
*Disabled Women's Network of Canada (DAWN Canada)*  
*Downsview Community Legal Services*  
*Ending Violence Association of Canada*  
*Family Service Toronto*  
*Fédération des travailleurs et travailleuses du Québec (FTQ)*  
*Feminists Deliver, BC*  
*First Call Child and Youth Advocacy Society*  
*Fish, Food & Allied Workers Union (FFAW-Unifor)*  
*Good Jobs for All Coalition*  
*HIV & AIDS Legal Clinic Ontario (HALCO)*  
*Hospital Employees' Union (BC)*  
*Income Security Advocacy Centre*  
*International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers BC Locals 213, 230, 258, 993 & 1003*  
*International Longshoremen's Association Local 273, Saint John, NB*  
*Justicia for Migrant Workers (J4MW)*  
*MacKillop Centre for Social Justice*  
*Manitoba Federation of Labour*  
*Marie Clarke Walker Consulting*  
*MASSE (Mouvement autonome et solidaire des sans-emploi) Québec*  
*Migrant Workers Alliance for Change (MWAC)*  
*Mouvement Action Chômage Lac-Saint-Jean*  
*Mouvement Action Chômage Pabok GÎM (Gaspésie et les Îles de la Madeleine)*  
*National Council of Women of Canada*  
*National Union of Public and General Employees (NUPGE)*  
*NB-ACORN*  
*Neighbourhood Legal Services (London & Middlesex) - NLSLM*  
*New Brunswick Federation of Labour*  
*New Brunswick Coalition for Pay Equity*  
*Newfoundland and Labrador Federation of Labour*  
*Nova Scotia Action Coalition for Community Wellbeing*  
*Nova Scotia Federation of Labour.*  
*Oakville and District Labour Council*  
*OCASI - Ontario Council of Agencies Serving Immigrants*  
*Ontario Alliance to End Homelessness*  
*Ontario Community Legal Clinics EI Working Group*  
*Ontario English Catholic Teachers' Association*  
*Ontario Federation of Labour*  
*Open Policy Ontario*

*OPSEU / SEFPO*  
*Parkdale Community Legal Clinic*  
*Parkdale Queen West Community Health Centre*  
*Peel Alliance to End Homelessness*  
*PEI Coalition for a Poverty Eradication Strategy*  
*PEI Federation of Labour*  
*Poverty Free Halton*  
*Prosper Canada*  
*PSAC Atlantic / AFPC Atlantique*  
*Public Interest Alberta*  
*Public Service Alliance of Canada (PSAC)*  
*Public Service Alliance of Canada, BC Region*  
*Punjabi Community Health Services (PCHS)*  
*Renfrew County Community Poverty Action Network (CPAN)*  
*Rexdale Community Legal Clinic*  
*Saint John Human Development Council*  
*Saskatchewan Federation of Labour*  
*Social Planning Council of Winnipeg*  
*South Asian Legal Clinic of Ontario (SALCO)*  
*Southern Nova Scotia Seasonal Workers Alliance*  
*Table des Groupes Populaires Côte-Nord*  
*Teamsters Canada*  
*Toronto & York Region Labour Council*  
*Unemployed Workers Help Centre, Saskatchewan*  
*UNIFOR*  
*United Steelworkers*  
*United Steelworkers Toronto Area Council*  
*UNITE HERE!*  
*West Coast LEAF*  
*West Scarborough Community Legal Services*  
*Wisdom2Action*  
*Women's Centre for Social Justice / WomenatthecentrE*  
*Women's Shelters Canada*  
*Worker Solidarity Network, BC*  
*Workers' Action Centre*  
*Workers Action Network (NL)*  
*Workers' Health and Safety Legal Clinic*  
*YWCA Canada*

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