



END CHILD & FAMILY POVERTY IN CANADA

Submission to the Standing Committee on
Social Policy re Bill 242
Queen's Park, Toronto

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Presented by: Laurel Rothman, Ontario Campaign 2000

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Campaign 2000 is a national, non-partisan network of 120 national, provincial and community partner organizations committed to working together to end child and family poverty in Canada.

Ontario Campaign 2000 is a provincial partner with 67 member organizations across the province (members listed in Appendix 1). www.campaign2000.ca



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I-Introduction

-My name is Laurel Rothman. I'm the National Coordinator of Campaign 2000 and the Director of Social Reform at Family Service Toronto, which houses the Campaign 2000 Coalition.

-I'm here speaking on behalf of Ontario Campaign 2000, a non partisan provincial coalition with 67 member organizations committed to ending child and family poverty in our province.

-We appreciate a number of steps which the Ontario government has taken over the past year that respond to some of Ontario Campaign 2000 recommendations, including the Poverty Reduction Strategy with a target to cut child poverty by 25% by 2013, and the commitment to phase in full day learning for 4 and 5 year olds.

-Campaign 2000 has been calling for almost 2 decades for a national system of universal early learning and child care in Canada. Provinces have an important role to play in providing and funding child care. Our research has confirmed for us that access to affordable quality child care is a key pathway out of poverty for low income families.

II – Comments on Bill 242

-Ontario Campaign 2000 supports Bill 242 as it implements the Full Day Learning Program. It sets out legislative changes to ensure that a universal program of full day learning for 4 and 5 year olds will be available to children in every community. The amendments to the Education Act require school boards to operate an extended day program.

-However, the extended day programming does not operate all year round. This leaves families without services during school holidays and in the summer and puts more pressure on the child care system to take care of children during these times.

-We would like to see an amendment to Subsection 4 to ensure that extended day programming for 4 and 5 year olds runs all year round.

-We would also like to see an amendment that mandates school boards to provide a nutritious lunch and snacks to children in the early learning program, as is currently the case for child care centres.



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III – Concerns re Funding for Child Care

-While we support the intent of Bill 242 and implementation of full day early learning, we have strong concerns about insufficient funding to maintain the current child care sector and ease the transition for the sector to full day learning.

-According to the Ministry of Children and Youth Services, 48% of child care centres will be affected by full day learning starting this September. Some centres are closing and many others are threatened because the Province has not announced any transitional funding to support the child care sector during this 5 year period of implementation.

-Ontario Campaign 2000 is particularly concerned that the province stands to lost 7,600 subsidized child care spaces if the March Ontario Budget does not include at least \$64million for child care. This would hurt low income families most – the very same families that Ontario’s Poverty Reduction Strategy is seeking to lift out of poverty.

-Access to affordable quality child care is key to the Ontario government achieving its target to cut child poverty by 25% by 2013. While the Province is strengthening Ontario’s early learning services for children aged 4 and 5, it is important that the child care sector that serves children from birth to 4 years is retained. You cannot build a new second floor of a house on top of a first floor that is crumbling.

- Two of your government’s main social policy planks, The Early Learning Program and Ontario’s Poverty Reduction Strategy, will falter if child care is allowed to collapse.
- We urge the Ontario Government to ensure that the next budget includes adequate transitional funding to ensure that the new full day early learning program works, and to include at least \$64 million to maintain subsidized child care spaces.



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Appendix 1 – Ontario Campaign 2000 Partners:

Ontario Social Development Council (Toronto), Interfaith Social Assistance Review Coalition (Waterloo), Registered Nurses' Association of Ontario (Toronto), Ontario Coalition for Better Child Care (Toronto), Ontario Association of Social Workers (Toronto), Ontario Association of Children's Rehabilitation Services (Toronto), Children's Mental Health Ontario (Toronto), Ontario Public Health Association (Toronto), Ontario Federation of Labour (Toronto), Ontario Public Service Employees Union (Toronto), Elementary Teachers Federation of Ontario (Toronto), Ontario Secondary School Teachers' Federation (Toronto), Ontario English Catholic Teachers' Association (Toronto), United Steelworkers of America, District 6 (Toronto), Ontario Association of Family Resource Programs (Toronto), Ontario Association of Food Banks (Toronto), Provincial Council of Women of Ontario (Niagara-on-the-Lake), The Community Social Planning Council (Toronto), Children's Aid Society of Toronto/Metro Campaign 2000 (Toronto), Family Service Association of Toronto (Toronto), Our Kids Our Future (Toronto), South Asian Family Support Services (Toronto), Community Development Halton (Burlington), Social Planning Council of Peel (Mississauga), Peel Poverty Action Group (Mississauga); Peterborough Social Planning Council (Peterborough), Durham Child Poverty Task Force (Ajax), 905-Area Faith Community Leaders; Social Planning and Research Council of Hamilton-Wentworth (Hamilton); Social Planning Council of Ottawa-Carleton (Ottawa), Ottawa-Carleton CPAG (Ottawa), Children's Aid Society of Ottawa-Carleton (Ottawa); Hastings & Prince Edward Legal Services (Belleville); Southwestern Ontario CPAG (London), Sisters of St. Joseph of the Diocese of London, Ontario (London), CAPC Niagara Brighter Futures (Niagara); Lakehead Social Planning Council (Thunder Bay), North Bay Labour Council; Income Security Advocacy Centre (Toronto), Elgin St. Thomas Health Unit (Sudbury), Ontario Association of Interval Transition Housing, Canadian Tamil Women's Community, Children's Aid Society of Peel, Legal Assistance of Windsor, Nellies, Ontario Federation of Indian Friendship Centres, Toronto Coalition for Better Child Care, Workers Action Centre (Toronto), Ontario Council of Agencies Serving Immigrants, African Canadian Social Development Council, Social Planning Council of Sudbury, Social Planning Council of Cambridge & North Dumfries, Kingston Lennox, Frontenac & Addington Children's Services Steering Committee, Ontario Public School Boards Association, Community Development Council Durham, Early Childhood Community Development Centre (St Catharines), The STOP Community Food Centre; Northumberland Coalition Against Poverty; the Help Centre of Northumberland; Northumberland Community Legal Clinic; Family Service Ontario; Interim Place (Mississauga), Sistering, Toronto & York Region Labour Council, Association of Ontario Health Centres.