



BURNABY
COMMUNITY
SERVICES

DELEGATION
2016 SEPTEMBER 19

August 12th, 2016

Kate O'Connell
c/o Office of the City Clerk
City of Burnaby
4949 Canada Way
Burnaby, B.C., V5G 1M2

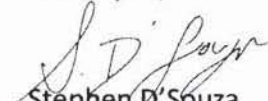
Dear Ms. Kate O'Connell,

Re: Request to Appear as a Delegation on Sept 19th, 2016

I am writing to request to appear as a delegation on Monday, September 19th, 2016. Along with Trish Garner, the Community Organizer with the BC Poverty Reduction Coalition (#810 - 815 West Hastings Street, Vancouver, BC, V6C 1B4), I will be speaking about a call for a poverty reduction plan in BC.

Enclosed you will find supporting material related to the delegation.

Thank you,

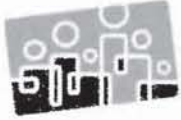

Stephen D'Souza,
Executive Director

Phone: 604-292-3904
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Copied to:
City Manager
Dir. Planning & Building

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Mayor and Council
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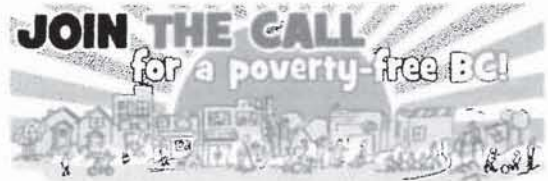
Dear Mayor Corrigan and Councillors,

Re: Call for a Poverty Reduction plan for BC

On behalf of Burnaby Community Services' Board of Director, I am writing to ask the City of Burnaby to join other municipalities and local band councils across British Columbia in taking action in support of a comprehensive poverty reduction strategy for the province.

Founded in 1971, Burnaby Community Services is a charitable society providing people who need support with a voice, resources and opportunities. We believe change can only occur when people are empowered to improve their lives and their community. Currently we offer a range of programs and publications to support families with low income and isolated seniors.

Through our various programs and services, we are reminded daily of the levels of poverty and homelessness in our society. The poverty rate in BC is approximately 1 in 10 and child poverty rates is 1 in 5, amongst the highest in Canada. And BC is falling even further behind: all other provinces either have poverty reduction plans or are in the process of adopting them, and the success of these plans is already clear across Canada.



There is a cost we all pay for inaction to reduce poverty. We pay in increased health care costs. We pay in higher crime. We pay in higher demand for community, social and charitable services. And we pay in lack of school readiness, reduced school success and in lower economic productivity. People who are poor get sick more, die sooner, and lack many opportunities that others take for granted.

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Therefore, Burnaby Community Services has joined with the *BC Poverty Reduction Coalition* to call for action from Councils and from the Union of BC Municipalities (UBCM). There are two ways that you can support this call for action:

1. Review and endorse the enclosed open letter: "A Call for a BC Poverty Reduction Plan".
2. Adopt the enclosed resolution to submit to the Union of BC Municipalities (UBCM) in time for this year's annual convention in September 2016, that the UBCM urge the province to adopt a comprehensive strategy.

Thank you for considering this bold act and sharing our vision of a poverty free BC.

Respectfully,

Stephen D'Souza,
Executive Director

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The Call for a Poverty Reduction Plan

We call on the Government of British Columbia to launch a comprehensive and accountable poverty reduction plan aimed at dramatically reducing homelessness and poverty in our province.

We are ashamed of the levels of poverty and homelessness in a society as wealthy as ours. We can drastically reduce poverty in British Columbia by joining hands and working together for a common goal that touches the hearts and lives of each of us. But we must act boldly.

We know that all of us pay for poverty. We pay in increased health care costs. We pay in higher crime. We pay in higher demand for community, social and charitable services. And we pay in lack of school readiness, reduced school success and in lower economic productivity. People who are poor get sick more, die sooner, and lack many opportunities that others take for granted. There is a false economy in failing to act boldly.

We know that BC is falling behind. All other provinces either have poverty reduction plans or are in the process of adopting them, and the success of these plans is already clear across Canada.

We urge the provincial government to provide leadership, and to adopt and legislate poverty reduction targets and timelines. As a first step, we call upon the government to appoint a lead minister for poverty reduction (a champion for this initiative), have them oversee a cross-ministry poverty action secretariat, and have them report annually on their progress. We recommend the following targets and timelines:

- Reduce BC's poverty rate by 30% within four years, and by 75% within 10 years.
- Ensure the poverty rate for children, lone-mother households, single senior women, Aboriginal people, people with disabilities and mental illness, and recent immigrants and refugees likewise declines by 30% in four years, and by 75% in ten years, in recognition that poverty is concentrated in these populations.
- Within two years, ensure that every British Columbian has an income that reaches at least 75% of the poverty line.
- Within two years, ensure no one has to sleep outside, and end all homelessness within eight years (ensuring all homeless people have good quality, appropriate housing).

In order to achieve these targets, we call upon the province to commit to specific policy measures and concrete actions in each of the following policy areas:

1. Provide adequate and accessible income support for the non-employed, and remove policy barriers so that recipients can build and maintain assets.
2. Improve the earnings and working conditions of those in the low-wage workforce.
3. Address the needs of those most likely to be living in poverty.
4. Address homelessness and adopt a comprehensive affordable housing and supportive housing plan.
5. Provide universal publicly-funded child care.
6. Enhanced support for training and education for low-income people.
7. Enhance community mental health and home support services, and expand integrated approaches to prevention and health promotion services.

There is nothing inevitable about poverty and homelessness in a society as wealthy as ours. Other jurisdictions that are setting clear targets are getting results. A comprehensive approach needs to boost the incomes of those living in poverty, but also build the social infrastructure, public services and assets that are vital to providing a path out of poverty and improving quality of life. If we commit to a bold plan, a dramatic reduction in poverty and homelessness within a few short years is perfectly achievable.