

MEDIA RELEASE

Poverty Reduction Strategy Needs Movement and Money

TORONTO, October 11, 2007 – The Income Security Advocacy Centre congratulates Dalton McGuinty and the Liberal party on their win in yesterday's election, and challenges them to take immediate steps to make good on their commitment to reduce poverty in Ontario.

“The Liberals made a strong commitment to a Poverty Reduction Strategy during the campaign, and we congratulate them on their win,” said Mary Marrone, Legal Director of the Income Security Advocacy Centre. “But now the hard work must begin. We look forward to working with the government to ensure that their Strategy will be an effective program that rolls out early in their new mandate.”

The Income Security Advocacy Centre is a member of the 25-in-5 Network, which called on all parties during the election campaign to commit to a comprehensive Poverty Reduction Strategy for Ontario, with a target of a 25% reduction in poverty within five years.

“Poverty reduction strategies around the world have seen success because they've been based on strong leadership from within government and widespread community consultation, and come with specific funding tied to the creation of the plan” said Marrone. “The government must now put both movement and money behind their commitments.”

In their campaign platform, the Liberal party committed to building a comprehensive poverty reduction strategy built around the Ontario Child Benefit and to consult with partners on developing indicators and timelines. Premier McGuinty also committed to the creation of firm poverty reduction targets within one year of taking office.

Both the New Democratic Party and the Progressive Conservatives also recognized the importance of creating a comprehensive poverty reduction strategy, and made various commitments aimed at reducing poverty. (See the backgrounder at www.incomesecurity.org/campaigns/documents/WorkingTable-3Oct.pdf for more information.)

“While the commitment to poverty reduction is an important win for us, we will continue to work for increasing social assistance rates to levels that are rational and just, increasing the minimum wage to \$10 immediately, providing energy help for low-income people, speeding up implementation of the Ontario Child Benefit, and making important improvements to Employment Standards” added Marrone. “We look forward to working with both government and the opposition parties on these issues in order to make life better for all low-income Ontarians.”