

November 24, 2016

Hon. Dr. Helena Jaczek
Minister of Community and Social Services
80 Grosvenor Street
Hepburn Block, 6th Floor
Minister's Office
Toronto, ON
M7A 1E9

Dear Minister:

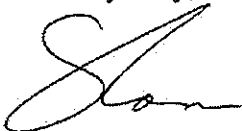
I am writing on behalf of all of the members of the Income Security Reform Working Group to express our strong support for a meaningful increase in social assistance rates in the 2017 budget.

As you know, we are meeting regularly to develop an Action Plan on income security reform and plan to have completed our work by July, 2017. Among other topics, we will make recommendations about how to define adequacy within the income security system, and how to adjust rates for those on social assistance over the next ten years to recognize the role of social assistance in ensuring adequate support.

However, the working group feels there is no doubt that present rates are inadequate and believes it would be very important to increase those rates by a meaningful amount that exceeds inflation in 2017. In our view, this would demonstrate the Ontario government's commitment to those most in need and be an early signal of its desire to respond positively to the recommendations contained in the Action Plan. Over the past year, we have already seen good evidence of the impact that adjustments to income support programs can have, specifically on the number of children living in poverty.

We recognize that there are decisions to be made about the form of any increase, including options directed at raising the income of all Ontarians living in deep poverty. However, at this point in our work we simply want to advise you that we believe an early, significant increase before we complete our task would be a very important step for the government to take.

Yours very truly,



George Thomson
Facilitator, Income Security Reform Working Group

c. Deputy Minister Janet Menard
Cristina Taglione, Chief of Staff, Minister's Office
Income Security Reform Working Group Members