



Toronto Conference
The United Church of Canada

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June 19, 2010

Hon. Dalton McGuinty
Premier of Ontario
Room 281, Main Legislative Building, Queen's Park
Toronto, Ontario M7A 1A1

Re: poverty reduction measures

Dear Mr. McGuinty,

I am writing on behalf of Toronto Conference of The United Church of Canada to inform you that on May 30, 2010 our Conference's annual meeting passed a motion commending your government for the steps it has taken to reduce poverty in Ontario. The motion also encourages further measures for your consideration and action. The text of our motion follows:

...that Toronto Conference communicate with the Government of Ontario to a) commend steps taken to date to reduce poverty in Ontario among all age groups, and b) request the adoption of further measures including but not limited to the following:

1. Adequate Income

- guarantee that the Social Assistance Review results in enhancements and does not reduce services or benefits for Workfare and Ontario Disability Support Program recipients
- continue to raise the minimum wage, currently \$10.25 an hour
- encourage employers to offer benefits to all workers, both full-time and part-time
- provide vocational assessments in conjunction with increased training and retraining opportunities
- to encourage educational upgrading, remove age limit for LEAP program
- provide legislation to protect the pensions of laid-off workers
- enhance English Second Language Programs to ensure that students can achieve employers' standards
- provide increased sheltered employment opportunities for physically or mentally disabled persons who wish to work
- change the age of leaving parental supervision from 16 to 18 years of age
- call on Ottawa to expand Employment Insurance coverage
- act to protect pension plans for seniors and lobby for the reduction of cutbacks to pensions

The mission of Toronto Conference is to strengthen Congregations, Pastoral Charges, Outreach Ministries, and Missions to be faithful followers of Jesus Christ.



2. Affordable Housing

- require municipalities to increase the number of available rent-to-income units
- encourage affordable options to townhouses or apartments such as stacked units
- provide tax or other incentives to builders who incorporate scattered rent-to-income units in market value housing projects
- require municipalities to maintain emergency shelters in good repair and encourage use of options which enhance privacy such as trailers, apartment hotels and so on
- ensure adequate supported housing units for youth, seniors and severely mentally ill and disabled persons

3. Personal Support

- ensure the provision of easily accessible services in low income communities including Legal Aid, credit counselling, marriage counselling, family planning, addictions counselling, and mental health support programs
- require school boards to offer Life Skills courses as part of both their regular and Continuing Education programs
- provide childcare in conjunction with English Second Language courses
- ensure Official Guardians are available to the mentally ill or disabled who lack family support
- ensure that adequate subsidized daycare spaces are provided in conjunction with the implementation of full-day kindergarten.

We appreciate the work that has been done to date. At the same time we recognize that we are a long way from having a society where poverty does not exist. As Christians in the United Church, we have a long-standing tradition of speaking on behalf of the poor and oppressed, just as Jesus did consistently during his ministry. As his followers, we share his concerns for those who are disadvantaged.

We encourage you to move forward even more assertively to create a province where all are valued, and none may be in want of the necessities of life.

Sincerely,

David W. Allen (Rev.)
Conference executive secretary