

Transitional Child Benefit: Presentation by Sulema James

This benefit provides up to \$230 for a newborn child prior to a family receiving the Ontario Child Benefit and National child benefit- both of which only take effect once the previous year's taxes are filed and the child can be formally claimed as a dependent.

The TCB bridges the gap for economically marginalized parents by providing the parent of a newborn child the means to purchase essential items such as diapers, clothing, formula and food, and in some cases, it provides a minimum safety net for parents who are in domestic violence situations, to relocate. It could mean the difference between staying in an abusive relationship for fear of not being able to provide the basic necessities of life, and, seeking safe housing for parent and newborn.

For many parents, myself included almost a decade ago, it meant adequate housing, the ability to provide essential nutrients while breastfeeding - something needed for optimal growth and development.

The provincial government's intended cut to this Transitional Child Benefit, is an attack on the most vulnerable in our community- those children who are born into low income homes. It is not simply cruel; it is counterproductive towards reducing poverty in our society, and therefore doesn't make any economic sense.. Parents and their children who are trying to escape the cycle of poverty will be driven even deeper into despair. Use of social programs, food banks, homeless shelters and hospital beds will increase.

In 2017, Ontario spent \$9,829 per person on social programs, the lowest among all other Canadian provinces. The Premier is removing even more of the minimum safety net for those children born into economical precarity, he is undermining the very essence of our core values here in Canada; that is, using political structures and policies to harm those children who cannot possibly defend themselves. That is why we are asking you, as a City Council to be the voice and the advocates for those children. Children who our province are about to neglect.

No persons' bank account should determine the health and well-being of a child. Children born in Western countries, at the most basic level, should have access to a safe and healthy home, and this includes the homes of families who are living in poverty. Parents all want the same things for their child(ren) regardless of their economic circumstances- optimal health, safety, love, and a sense of belonging. By burdening the municipalities to take on the financial shortfall of this benefit, Ford is once again hurting communities and it's most defenceless residents: our children.