

AUG 02 2016

Minister of  
Families, Children and  
Social Development



Ministre de  
la Famille, des Enfants et  
du Développement social

Ottawa, Canada K1A 0J9

OFFICE OF THE CITY CLERK

AUG 05 2016

REF'D TO J. Pilon Council  
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JUL 28 2016 ACTION \_\_\_\_\_

His Worship Fred Eisenberger  
Mayor of Hamilton  
71 Main Street W, 2nd Floor  
Hamilton ON L8P 4Y5

Dear Mr. Mayor:

I am responding to your letter of April 26, 2016. You wrote concerning the Eleventh Report of the City of Hamilton's Board of Health as well as a subsequent motion, which was carried by Hamilton City Council, to urge joint federal and provincial consideration for and investigation into a basic income guarantee for Ontarians and all Canadians.

My overarching goal is to increase economic and social security for all Canadians, especially those who are the most vulnerable. As a result, the Government is taking a number of steps to improve the quality of life of Canadians and to help those who are living in low income.

The Government of Canada has committed to developing a Canadian Poverty Reduction Strategy that will align with existing provincial and municipal strategies. The Government intends to set targets to reduce poverty and to measure and publicly report on progress. As part of the development process, the Government is creating a plan for engaging partners and stakeholders to explore a variety of options for reducing poverty and strengthening the middle class.

As you indicated in your letter, the Government of Ontario has recently announced plans to study the idea of a guaranteed annual income in its jurisdiction. The Government of Quebec has also announced similar plans. Departmental officials will monitor this work and learn from its conclusions and recommendations.

It is also important to note that seniors already receive a guaranteed basic income through the Old Age Security (OAS) pension and the Guaranteed Income Supplement (GIS). The Government recognizes the importance of these benefits for seniors and is committed to strengthening them to improve the quality of life for seniors. Therefore, the GIS top-up was increased by \$947 annually for the lowest-income single seniors as of July 1, 2016, which more than doubles the current maximum GIS top-up. Furthermore, the increase in the age of eligibility for OAS benefits from 65 to 67, which was scheduled to take place in 2023, has now been cancelled. This will ensure that vulnerable seniors do not have to wait two additional years in order to receive their benefits. I will also continue to work with the Department of Finance to look at how a new Seniors Price Index that reflects the cost of living faced by seniors could be developed.

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Supporting families and ensuring that every child gets the best possible start in life is another priority of this government. Therefore, the Government introduced the Canada Child Benefit (CCB) on July 1, 2016. Similar to the GIS for low-income seniors, the CCB acts as a basic income but for families with children. The CCB is a tax-free, income-tested benefit that is more generous than the former suite of federal child benefits and is targeted to families who need it most. The CCB provides a maximum annual benefit of up to \$6,400 per child under the age of 6 and up to \$5,400 per child for those aged 6 through 17. With the introduction of a better-targeted child benefit, about 300,000 fewer children will be living with low income in 2017 than in 2014.

I hope that this information is helpful in addressing your concerns.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'JY Duclos', written in a cursive style.

The Honourable Jean-Yves Duclos, P.C., M.P.  
Minister of Families, Children and Social Development

c.c. The Honourable Jane Philpott, P.C., M.P.  
Minister of Health

The Honourable MaryAnn Mihychuk, P.C., M.P.  
Minister of Employment, Workforce Development and Labour