

The budget: Measuring-out in coffee spoons for families^[1]

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Source: Campaign 2000

Format: Press release

Publication Date: 22 Mar 2011

AVAILABILITY

See text below.

Text of the press release:

Today's federal budget measures out tidbits for families and children in coffee spoons rather than putting forward urgently needed social support, says Campaign 2000. There is nothing for the most vulnerable families -- especially the 610,000 low income children and their mothers -- who feel the double burden of job loss at the workplace and increased economic stress at home. And there is nothing at all that even hints at a vision for the future to support modern-day families.

"Going into this budget, Campaign 2000 looked for a mix of social infrastructure and income supports to prevent further poverty and to reduce our 9.1% rate of child and family poverty. Instead, it is silent on early childhood education and care, post-secondary education, and affordable housing. Nor is there any enhancement to the child benefit which low income working parents need to enable them to pay the rent and feed the children," said Laurel Rothman, National Coordinator of Campaign 2000.

"The one measure to address poverty among seniors is paltry," said Sid Frankel, Social Planning Council of Winnipeg. "The \$50 increase to the Guaranteed Income Supplement for seniors is only available to those on the very least income. This proposed change is about one-third of what is needed to bring single seniors -- who are mostly women -- out of poverty. To administer this increase, the government is establishing a separate transfer mechanism, making the tax system more complicated," he added.

"We were quite disappointed to see no mention of a concrete plan to reduce and eventually eradicate poverty," said Dennis Howlett of Make Poverty History. "The recent parliamentary report on poverty outlined a plan for Canada which all parties supported in principle. That's the approach we will continue to look for from all the political parties. It includes enhanced income support and robust community services including child care, affordable housing and a national pharmacare program."

"The budget reflects poor political and ineffectual social policy choices, hiding many of the real costs to Canadians. It didn't establish a universally accessible child care system for families but it further reduced corporate taxes, leaving out the price tag. Nor did the budget propose how to provide children in First Nations communities with a good education and clean water, but it committed to more costly prisons," Rothman added.

This budget does little to bolster the tattered safety net that has left Canadians in economic insecurity. Aboriginal people, sole support mothers, recent immigrants, racialized groups, and people with disabilities face greater risks. At the same time, inequality between the rich and the poor in Canada has grown more than in any other OECD country (except Germany). "We will continue to seek changes that reduce poverty and inequality and make the tax system more progressive", adds Rothman.

Region: Canada^[2]

Tags: budget^[3]

poverty^[4]

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