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End Child Poverty in Canada

Tackling the Human Deficit: Investing in Children & Families in Ontario

*Brief to the Ontario Standing Committee on
Finance and Economic Affairs*

"Do the people of Ontario really have a good reason to celebrate a provincial budget that awards a \$5 billion tax cut? ... I know how I would choose. I would choose people over tax cuts."

Dalton McGuinty, Liberal Leader
The Human Deficit. The Real Cost of the Mike Harris Budget,
Liberal Response to the Budget, May 1997

February 10, 2004

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on behalf of Ontario Campaign 2000

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Introduction

Campaign 2000 is a national public education movement of over 90 organizations dedicated to the implementation of the 1989 federal House of Commons resolution to eliminate child poverty in Canada. In Ontario, Campaign 2000 engages in research and public education regarding child and family poverty in conjunction with our over 40 partners representing professional groups and organizations, faith communities, labour unions, ethno-cultural organizations, individuals and community organizations.

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Tackling the Human Deficit: Investing in Children and Families in Ontario

It is time to learn from the lessons of the past. The legacy of across the board tax cuts has left us with a persistent fiscal and human deficit in Ontario. Relying on economic growth alone to address family income security will not be enough to pull us out of this deficit. A different course is needed. Now is the time, as Premier McGuinty once said, to "choose people over tax cuts".

Choosing people over tax cuts will require doing more than ending further tax cuts. The development of public policies and services that invest in people must proceed with rebuilding the province's fiscal capacity. Tax cuts have manufactured a crisis in public revenue. The cost of tax cuts is staggering: a \$14 billion loss in annual provincial revenue, a current budgetary deficit of some \$5.6 billion, public services in disarray, and public policy paralysis.

For many years now Campaign 2000 has pointed out that general tax cuts are not an effective anti-poverty strategy because they often deliver little or no benefit to low income families, tend to benefit upper income families disproportionately, and deplete public revenues available for other types of social investment. And social investments, not economic growth alone, are really what is needed to tackle the human deficit.

Relying on economic growth alone has only taken us so far. As our brief shows, child poverty persists despite strong economic growth. There is not a trade off between economic growth and social investments. Indeed, social investments that extend the ladders of opportunity to all children are a key to their future success as adults, and to the future success of our economy.

Public policy must play an active role in ensuring that all our citizens are included and share in our collective prosperity. It is clear that the people of Ontario understand this. In pre-election polling, about 80% of Ontarians indicated that action on child poverty should be a priority for the Ontario government over the next five years.

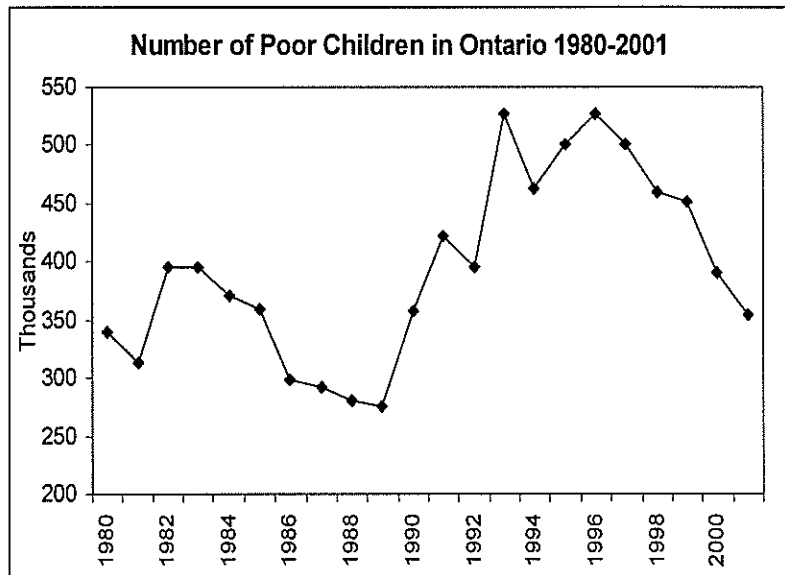
They have voted for a package of measures that would restore public services and advance policies in areas that are key to addressing child and family poverty, and include: employment oriented policies, early childhood education and care, education, housing, child benefits and improvements to social assistance.

Campaign 2000 has long urged for a comprehensive approach in these areas to tackle child poverty. We urge that the province take the necessary steps to ensure that the fiscal capacity of the province, so badly depleted through previous tax cuts, is restored to meet these commitments.

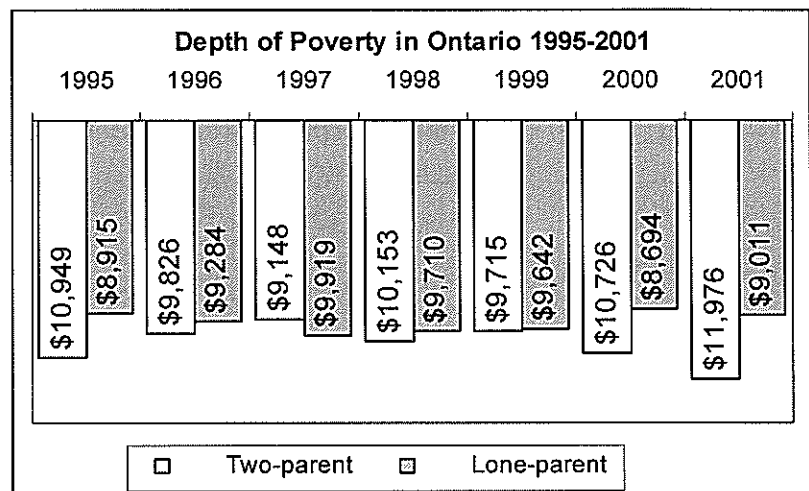
Recommendation #1: Campaign 2000 calls on the Provincial government to make social investments in comprehensive policies to tackle child poverty its priority, and, concurrently, to ensure that the fiscal capacity of the province is restored to meet these commitments.

Deep Poverty Remains Despite Prosperity

Public policy in Ontario has assumed that economic growth alone will deal with one of our province's biggest human deficits: child and family poverty. Ontario's impressive economic growth over the past few years has contributed to a cyclical decline in the overall rate of child poverty in the province. At the same time it has failed to invest in the social supports that families rely on in their communities. The results for families are distressing; the persistence of deep poverty among more than 350,000 children in Ontario is a clear signal that economic growth will only take us so far in reducing poverty. To successfully guarantee the well-being of *all* children, governments must do their part and invest in people.



Even as Ontario's economy steamed ahead and prosperity soared, many families continued to be left behind. Among those who remain in poverty, the severity of the economic insecurity amidst such prosperity should be a cause for deep concern. Circumstances for low-income lone parents have stagnated while the conditions of low-income two parent families have actually deteriorated. Low-income lone parent families remain, on average, \$9,000 below the poverty line. Among low-income



two-parent families, the average gap between income and the poverty line actually grew between 1999 and 2001 to almost \$12,000.

Strong economic growth is a factor in reducing rates of child and family poverty. However, the economy, by itself, is not likely to accomplish substantial poverty reduction. While the recent downward trend in child poverty seems encouraging, the rate of 13% for 2001 is still higher than the 11.4% figure achieved during the peak of the last economic boom in 1989.

There are two main conclusions that can be drawn from the past 2 decades of economic cycles:

- 1) First, the overall level of child poverty ratcheted up to levels that were higher overall through the 1990s than in the 1980s in Ontario.
- 2) Second, while it is evident that economic booms and busts can bring the poverty rate noticeably down and up, over the past 20 years we see that the very best the economy can do on its own is leave more than 1 child in 10 poor.

Economic growth has likely accomplished all it can in reducing poverty. To go any lower, governments need to act. Investments in both income support and community services are desperately needed.

Building Labour Market Policies to Reduce Poverty

Good jobs that adequately support families are a key component in reducing child poverty. Part-time, contract, or seasonal jobs with few or no benefits are, however, increasingly common. Economic growth has led to reduced welfare caseloads. But the number of children who remain poor is alarmingly high. Many of the unemployed poor have become working poor parents in precarious jobs that pay wages at or near minimum wage. A Toronto Social Services Survey of people who left social assistance in 2001, for example, found that only 43% had improved their financial situation.

Consider that a single parent working full-time has earnings that fall far short of the low-income line; a parent in this situation would need almost double the minimum wage just to escape poverty. Work needs to be compensated fairly to promote the well-being of families.

Wages required to reach poverty line for full-time, minimum wage workers in Ontario, 2003

Family Type	Poverty Line	Market Earnings (full-time)	Wages required to reach poverty line
Single person	\$18,849	\$12,467	\$10.30
Single parent, 1 child	\$23,561	\$12,467	\$12.90
2 earners, 1 child	\$29,303	\$24,934	\$8.05 x 2
2 earners, 2 children	\$35,471	\$24,934	\$9.74 x 2

Based on earner working 35 hours a week for 52 weeks in a city with population over 500,000. Source: HRDC Labour Division; National Council of Welfare website, 2003.

Ontario's minimum wage had been frozen since 1995 so its real purchasing power eroded by 20 percent due to the steady rise in consumer prices. While Campaign 2000 applauds the recent increase in the minimum wage to \$7.15 we believe the plan to reach \$8.00 could be reached sooner

and that the target could be higher. The minimum wage should also be indexed to inflation annually to sustain the real value of the gains to the province's basic wage floor.

Poverty is about the dis-investment in people and that affects their ability to participate in and benefit from the labour market. Campaign 2000 urges the new government to move quickly on all of your commitments to develop labour market policies that enable people to achieve their potential. These commitments include: better skills training; more apprenticeships; access to Ontario's trades and professions for those who are foreign trained; a review of the labour code and repeal of the 60 hour work week; affordable quality child care; reforms around welfare to work; quality education and affordable post secondary education.

Recommendation #2: Campaign 2000 applauds the recent increase in the minimum wage. But Ontario should set a higher target than \$8.00 an hour, reach it sooner and index it to inflation. The province should also move quickly on commitments to develop labour market policies that invest in people to enable them to achieve their full potential.

Ensuring Income Security through Social Assistance

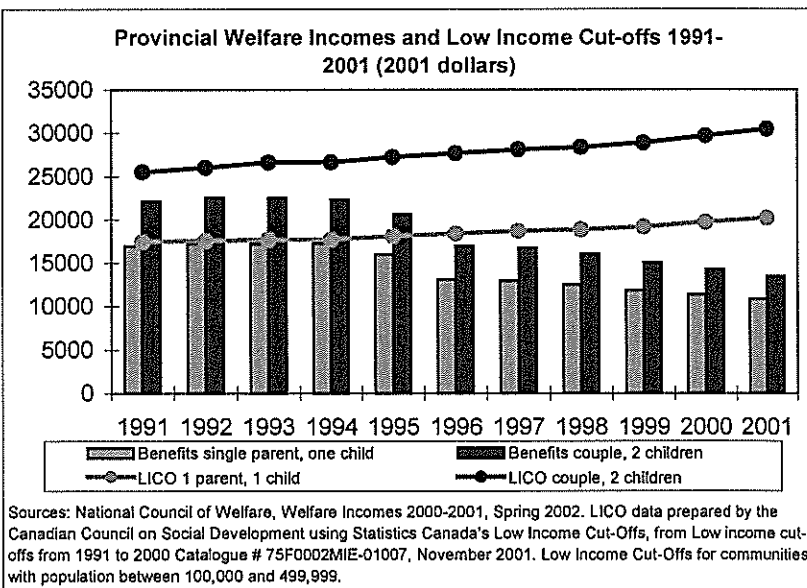
Campaign 2000 believes that a fundamental change in direction is needed for Ontario's social assistance system. It is crucial that we support families and children through difficult transitions in their lives and provide them with the financial and social supports necessary for their well-being.

There are two approaches to welfare reform. The "pure" workfare approach slashes benefits, makes access to and life on welfare as difficult as possible, and seeks the shortest and cheapest route into what is often marginal employment for recipients. The human development approach ensures a reasonable level of income for shelter and other needs while investing in the necessary skills and supports to achieve a successful and sustainable transition to employment.

The workfare approach does reduce caseloads during periods of economic growth. But it does little to invest in people. And the jobs they get tend to be those most vulnerable to a downturn in the economy. Many recipients end up trapped in a revolving door cycling between welfare and work and remain, in either case, poor.

Children are one of the single largest groups of people who rely on social assistance, and they are suffering. Social assistance was the program of last resort but now offloads responsibility onto the voluntary community sector to attempt to

provide for the basic needs of recipients through food banks, shelters and community programs.



Growing up in Ontario constantly experiencing hunger and homelessness is no way to grow up. This in such a wealthy province is a disgrace.

The Liberal election platform promised a human development approach to social assistance with an emphasis on skills training, child care, and housing to help parents find sustaining employment and climb out of poverty permanently. Campaign 2000 supports this approach.

The recent scrapping of the lifetime ban was a positive step. Here are some others. Existing human resources within the welfare system should become more oriented to opportunity planning. And the province must do its part to ensure that there are real opportunities to be had in skills training, which should include post-secondary education as a welfare-to-work training option (see our comments under post-secondary education). Also bring back fully the Supports To Employment Program (STEP). This program provides an important bridge to the labour market and has been proven to increase employment and income levels.

Campaign 2000 urges that you implement your commitment to index social assistance to inflation right away. It has been 10 years since there has been any increase in welfare rates. With each passing year that the cost of living goes up, the purchasing power of benefits diminishes - with inflation, the cuts in 1995 now amount to more than a 30% loss in welfare benefits. While most other income security programs in Canada including the Canada Child Tax benefit and Old Age Security are adjusted to inflation, benefits for families on social assistance are further diminished every year.

The impact of more than 10 years of neglect is apparent among families that are having trouble with paying the rent, maintaining housing, caring for their children and feeding themselves. The lack of adjustments for inflation is also true for people with disabilities, whose benefits are further diminished every year. Benefits for families with children are only 50% to 60% of what they would need just to reach the poverty line. The sheer inadequacy of welfare incomes is counterproductive to the objective of helping families get on their feet. Living in conditions of such deep poverty leaves little room for more than finding ways to survive on a day-to-day basis.

While inflation protection will stop the annual hidden cut to social assistance benefits, more needs to be done to reach benefit levels that are adequate to feed children and pay the rent. The shelter allowance portion of Ontario Works and Ontario Disability Support Program benefits should reflect typical rent levels in Ontario's communities and the basic needs portion of these benefits should also be brought back up to 1994 levels.

Recommendation #3: Social Assistance Supports: Implement election commitments to provide recipients with quality skills training, child care, and housing to help parents find sustaining employment and climb out of poverty permanently. We urge that you re-orient our system of social assistance to opportunity planning, including access to post-secondary education as a welfare-to-work training option.

Social Assistance Adequacy: In addition to implementing the Liberal commitment to adjust social assistance to inflations, the shelter allowance portion of Ontario Works and Ontario Disability Support Program benefits should also be raised to typical rent levels in Ontario communities and the basic needs portion of these benefits should be increased to 1994 levels.

Ending the Clawback of the National Child Benefit

The Canada Child Tax Benefit is part of Canada's effort to fight child poverty and is made up of a base benefit and a supplement (NCBS) for low-income families. In July 2003 the federal NCB Supplement increased to \$1,463/year for the first child. The base portion of the Child Tax Benefit increased to \$1,169 for the first child (which includes indexing to protect it from inflation). While the federal government could and should do more to raise the benefit, improvements to child benefits represents one of the few areas where progress is being made in fighting child poverty.

Unfortunately, and quite unfairly, the Province of Ontario claws back every penny of the NCB Supplement from children whose families are on social assistance. The rationale of the claw back is to increase parental attachment to the labour market. Under the current design, if parents work and earn enough to leave welfare they keep the federal supplement on top of their earnings. But if they are on welfare at all, the full value of the supplement is deducted from their benefits.

The argument that deducting the child benefit supplement as income from welfare actually promotes access and attachment to the labour market is not particularly strong. Consider the following:

1. The benefit is deducted from parents and children on welfare who are *not* expected to seek and accept employment. Disabled parents on ODSP, single parents on welfare with pre-school children, and children in receipt of temporary care allowances (community foster children) are not expected to work, but the supplement is deducted from their welfare. This is quite inequitable and unfair if the purported rationale is to promote labour market attachment.
2. Parents deemed employable and on welfare with school-aged children are already required to seek and accept employment under Ontario Works. Deducting the federal supplement does not address the actual reasons they have trouble leaving welfare, such as:
 - in-work poverty, that is, employment that is not viable to support a family because it is temporary, provides insufficient hours, and/or the wages and benefits are too low;
 - deeper welfare poverty which creates multiple barriers to employment such as unstable housing, ill health, transportation difficulties, no phone, shabby clothing and so on;
 - lack of child care that is safe, stable, developmentally enhancing and affordable;
 - lack of access to training and educational opportunities that could lead to sustaining employment.

The claw back is clearly inequitable and for the sake of children would be better left with recipients to have the maximum intended anti-poverty impact. Further, there are policy levers at the province's disposal that can more directly and effectively address the barriers and issues that result in parents relying on welfare, or finding themselves trapped cycling between welfare and work.

The Liberal government platform promised to phase out the clawback. Campaign 2000 supports this move and urges immediate implementation. The government should also ensure that community programs are preserved that are currently funded through the municipal portion of welfare savings arising from the clawback.

Recommendation #4: Address anti-poverty and equity policy goals by rescinding the claw back of the NCBS from social assistance recipients as promised immediately. Ensure that community programs funded through welfare savings arising from the clawback are preserved.

Strengthening the Role of Employment Insurance

While social assistance is under provincial auspices and Employment Insurance (EI) is federal, the two programs are related because they both provide some degree of income protection to working parents who become unemployed.

The first line of defence for unemployed parents should be EI. Changes to EI and changes in the labour market have resulted, however, in EI providing increasingly less coverage for unemployed workers in Ontario. Over the past decade the proportion of unemployed workers receiving EI has dropped to 25% from 57% in 1990 in Ontario.

Those who do not qualify for EI end up on social assistance. It is in Ontario's interest and the interest of workers to secure better coverage under EI from Ottawa.

Recommendation # 5: Secure better coverage under EI from Ottawa to protect Ontario's working families and ensure economic security through periods of unemployment.

Investing in Early Childhood Education and Care

Considerable research now supports the view that - if they are of high quality - Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) services can meet multiple goals simultaneously:

1. Support and enhance children's well-being, development and lifelong learning;
2. Support parents in education, training, employment, socially and personally;
3. Foster social solidarity and social cohesion;
4. Provide equity for diverse groups in society.

In Ontario, there are almost 2,000,000 children age 0-12 of whom close to 70% have mothers in the paid workforce. At the same time, there are approximately 167,090 regulated child care and nursery school spaces – enough for less than 12% of children.

Ontario has gone from leader to laggard in its child care policy. It is estimated that Ontario's spending on regulated child care has declined by \$160 million since 1995. None of the federal Early Childhood Development Initiative (ECDI) funding (at \$192M) is designated for quality child care. While quality child care was a central feature of the Mustard and McCain vision of the Early Years, in practice it is virtually invisible.

The linkage with the province's education system is in disarray. Since the restrictive Education Funding Formula was introduced community access to schools as a hub of community life is diminishing. In Toronto, for example, 43% fewer groups are using school space in 2002 than in 1999. Increased user fees for school permits are forcing programs to close or look elsewhere.

At the national level there is considerable interest in child care despite the past lack of leadership in Ontario. 90% of Canadians support having a national child care program, and 86% want a publicly

funded system. The federal government has begun to invest in child care and promised to accelerate investments under the Multilateral Framework on Early Learning and Child Care in the Throne Speech. Child care is an area for real growth so now is the time for Ontario to signal its support and resume its leadership role.

Ontario must adopt a coherent approach to ECEC policy. Campaign 2000 supports the Liberal promise of child care as a seamless extension of the public education system. The education funding formula must be amended to ensure space is available for non-profit ECEC programs in schools, and to ensure that there is space for these programs in every new school. The province should also review how its federal ECDI funds are spent with a view to developing a comprehensive system that includes child care and is linked to the education system.

Ontario's system of child care is in dire need of stabilization. More than half of the Liberal target committing \$300 million within its first mandate is required just to stem losses to the system since 1995. Restoring regulated child care to 1995 levels should be acted on immediately. And to make real progress on establishing ECEC programs in Ontario the province should develop a multiyear plan to achieve the goal of every child having access to ECEC services. The province, in conjunction with federal investments, should raise the overall target of investment commitments for child care within its first mandate.

Recommendation #6: The first step is for the Ontario government to restore regulated child care funding to 1995 levels immediately. Review how federal ECDI funds are spent in Ontario with a view to developing a comprehensive system that includes child care and is linked to the education system. Ontario should also work with the federal government to substantially enhance investments under the Multilateral Framework on Early Learning and Child Care.

Revise the Education Funding Formula to recognize the legitimacy and costs associated with establishing early childhood development within the education system and of the community use of schools for programs that benefit children and youth. Develop a multiyear plan to achieve the goal of every child having access to a coherent system of ECEC services. Raise the overall target of provincial investment commitments for child care within the government's first mandate.

An Affordable Housing Strategy

Stable, affordable housing is essential to support sustainable, inclusive communities and to ensuring the health and well-being of children. However, dwindling federal and provincial government support have combined to create a rental housing crisis in Ontario. Access to affordable housing continues to be a major problem in Ontario due to very low vacancy rates, very low levels of new construction which do not keep up with demand, as well as the partial decontrol of rents implemented in 1998.

Beginning in 1995, the province cancelled all new social housing starts and downloaded responsibilities for existing social housing to municipalities. By 1998, the Tenant Protection Act removed rent controls on new or vacant units. The ensuing result is that Ontario has been losing 44% more rental units each year than are being built even as demand by renters continues to grow. Each year, more and more tenants are looking for fewer available units as the availability of affordable housing dwindles. By 2001, Ontario's vacancy rate of 1.7% was still stuck far below the norm of 3% associated with a balanced rental market. And even though there was some

improvement in terms of vacancy rates in 2002, virtually all openings are at the upper end of the rental market and far out of reach for the majority of households.

Rents have continued to rise in the vast majority of municipalities. In 2001, the average rent in Ontario for a two-bedroom apartment rose 4.1%, more than twice the rate of inflation. Social housing waiting lists are getting longer with typical waits lasting 2 to 10 years. In Toronto alone, there are an estimated more than 40,000 children on waiting lists for affordable housing.

Not surprisingly, municipalities across Ontario have not experienced any respite in the use of shelters over the past few difficult years. Toronto has about 1,000 children under the age of 12 in homeless shelters every night. Shelters are not substitutes for affordable, permanent housing. The City of Toronto reports that families staying in the emergency shelter system are having difficulties finding housing so they can move on; instead, they are staying in shelters for longer periods of time.

Clearly, incomes are not keeping up with housing costs and new rental supplements could go a long way towards ensuring families have safe, stable housing. Just as critically, new housing units are desperately needed to meet the growing needs of families.

Ontario requires about 18,000 new rental units annually, according to estimates based on population projections from the Ontario Ministry of Finance. The private sector delivers less than 2,000 new units annually. To meet the needed target, the province must invest in a new housing supply program that will lead to the creation of much needed new units.

Campaign 2000 supports the Liberal commitment to match federal funding under the Affordable Housing Program to create 20,000 new affordable housing units, provide shelter allowances to working families who pay more than 50% of their income on rent, create a rent bank for those who are in short-term arrears, and to replace the Tenant Protection Act and bring back rent controls. These represent a very welcomed first step towards reestablishing the province's role in creating affordable housing in Ontario.

Recommendation #7: Liberal commitments on affordable housing may fall short of the need but represent a welcomed first step towards reestablishing a provincial role. Given the urgency of the housing crisis, the province should move quickly on its commitments and attempt to improve on the targets it has set to create affordable housing.

Accessibility to Post-Secondary Education

A post-secondary education adds considerably to the skills of Ontario's workforce and to the country's human development potential. The link between education and employment is irrefutable. The shares of jobs are increasing substantially for those with post-secondary education.

However, the doors to a post-secondary education are increasingly being closed for low-income students. Statistics Canada reports that young people from the wealthiest quarter of families are 2.5 times more likely to pursue a university education. Access to student loans, a key indicator for determining how many students from lower-income families access post-secondary studies, show a troublesome 40% drop since 1995-96.

As government operating funds to colleges and universities were dramatically cut in the past decade, students were asked to carry more and more of the cost of education through tuition fees. Tuition fees, as a portion of university operating budgets, have risen from 22% in 1991-92 to 41% in 2000-01. Average fees for undergraduate programs have increased by nearly 70% since 1995-96. The rising costs of tuition and the prospect of crippling student debts now pose a significant barrier to access of post-secondary education.

Funding must be re-injected into the system and steps must be taken to freeze and lower tuition fees to ensure that access to a post-secondary education is not determined by income.

Ontario should also re-examine its policy with regard to welfare recipients who pursue post-secondary studies. Ontario made recipients ineligible for welfare as college and university students and transferred 17,000 parents to student loans. These students face the prospect of a huge debt-load and, in light of rising fees, are finding it increasingly difficult to support themselves, their studies, and their family.

Access to child care is important for many parents, particularly single parents, to pursue a post secondary education. But the province has required that students declare loans from the Ontario Student Assistance Program as income in the needs test for a provincial child care subsidy. This places an extra burden and barrier on student parents. Eligibility for child care subsidies should be based on actual income, not borrowed money.

Campaign 2000 supports the Liberal commitment to invest \$750 million in post-secondary education, freeze tuition fees, expand financial assistance to students, and provide tuition waivers to needy students.

Recommendation #8: Campaign 2000 supports the Liberal commitment to invest \$750 million in post-secondary education, freeze tuition fees, expand financial assistance to students, and provide tuition waivers to needy students. Make access to post secondary education a welfare-to-work option. Rescind the requirement that students declare loans from the Ontario Student Assistance Program as income in the needs test for a provincial child care subsidy.

Child Support

Ontario's system of child support needs to be over-hauled. It has been reported that in cases registered with the Ontario Family Responsibility Office support arrears total \$1.2 billion. Campaign 2000 supports the recent announcement by the Ontario government to step-up enforcement.

While it is popular to focus on "dead-beat parents", and certainly parents do have a responsibility to support their children and much better enforcement is required, a larger concern should be around the children who are owed and rely on this support.

Many countries have systems of child support in which it is the child who is the focus of concern, and the state does more than make support orders and chase after parents who are in arrears. The state backs up the child's right to support by advancing payments so that payments are regular, and by assuring a pre-set minimum if a parent defaults or is unable to pay.

The availability of child support is also an important factor for women staying in the work force after leaving welfare. It might be noted that only about 20% of single parents on social assistance receive child support.

Ontario should begin to examine and build its own system of assured child support.

Recommendation #9: Campaign 2000 supports the recent announcement by the Ontario government to step-up enforcement. The Government of Ontario should begin to examine and bring in an Ontario system of assured child support.

Summary of Recommendations

Ontarians said loud and clear: action on child poverty should be a top priority. Investments in children cannot wait for brighter days especially when inequality in Ontario continues to grow amidst prosperous times. We have heard much about Ontario's fiscal deficit. But the social deficit affecting too many of our families is something that we hear very little about. We have a responsibility to step up and pay for what is needed – this has to be part of Ontario's debate.

Campaign 2000 calls on the Provincial government to make social investments in comprehensive policies to tackle child poverty its priority, and, concurrently, to ensure that the fiscal capacity of the province is restored to meet these commitments.

Key Recommendations for a Poverty Agenda:

- ❖ **Minimum Wage:** Campaign 2000 applauds the recent increase in the minimum wage. But Ontario should set a higher target than \$8.00 an hour, reach it sooner and index it to inflation. The province should also move quickly on commitments to develop labour market policies that invest in people to enable them to achieve their full potential.
- ❖ **Social Assistance Supports:** Implement election commitments to provide recipients with quality skills training, child care, and housing to help parents find sustaining employment and climb out of poverty permanently. We urge that you re-orient our system of social assistance to opportunity planning, including access to post-secondary education as a welfare-to-work training option.
- ❖ **Social Assistance Adequacy:** In addition to implementing the Liberal commitment to adjust social assistance to inflations, the shelter allowance portion of Ontario Works and Ontario Disability Support Program benefits should also be raised to typical rent levels in Ontario communities and the basic needs portion of these benefits should be increased to 1994 levels.
- ❖ **National Child Benefit Clawback:** Address anti-poverty and equity policy goals by rescinding the claw back of the NCBS from social assistance recipients as promised immediately. Ensure that community programs funded through welfare savings arising from the clawback are preserved.
- ❖ **Quality Child Care:** The first step is for the Ontario government to restore regulated child care funding to 1995 levels immediately. Review how federal ECDI funds are spent in Ontario with a view to developing a comprehensive system that includes child care and is linked to the education system. Ontario should also work with the federal government to substantially enhance investments under the Multilateral Framework on Early Learning and Child Care.
- ❖ **Housing:** Liberal commitments on affordable housing may fall short of the need but represent a welcomed first step towards reestablishing a provincial role. Given the urgency of the housing crisis, the province should move quickly on its commitments and attempt to improve on the targets it has set to create affordable housing.

- ❖ **Child Support:** Campaign 2000 supports the recent announcement by the Ontario government to step-up enforcement. The Government of Ontario should begin to examine and bring in an Ontario system of assured child support.

Additional Recommendations:

- ❖ **Education:** Revise the Education Funding Formula to recognize the legitimacy and costs associated with establishing early childhood development within the education system and of the community use of schools for programs that benefit children and youth. Develop a multiyear plan to achieve the goal of every child having access to a coherent system of ECEC services. Raise the overall target of provincial investment commitments for child care within the government's first mandate.
- ❖ **Post-Secondary Education:** Campaign 2000 supports the Liberal commitment to invest \$750 million in post-secondary education, freeze tuition fees, expand financial assistance to students, and provide tuition waivers to needy students. Make access to post secondary education a welfare-to-work option. Rescind the requirement that students declare loans from the Ontario Student Assistance Program as income in the needs test for a provincial child care subsidy.
- ❖ **Employment Insurance Advocacy:** Secure better coverage under EI from Ottawa to protect Ontario's working families and ensure economic security through periods of unemployment.

ONTARIO CAMPAIGN 2000 PARTNERS

Ontario-Wide *Ontario Social Development Council (Toronto), Interfaith Social Assistance Review Coalition (Waterloo), Registered Nurses' Association of Ontario (Toronto), Ontario Coalition for Better Child Care (Toronto), Ontario Psychological Association (Toronto), Ontario Association of Social Workers (Toronto), Ontario Association of Children's Rehabilitation Services (Toronto), Ontario Association of Children's Mental Health Centres (Toronto), Ontario Public Health Association (Toronto), Ontario Public Service Employees Union (Toronto), Elementary Teachers Association of Ontario (Toronto), Ontario Secondary School Teachers Federation (Toronto), United Steelworkers of America, District 6 (Toronto), Ontario Association of Family Resource Programs (Toronto); Provincial Council of Women of Ontario, Canadian Tamil Women's Community, Canadian Pensioners Concerned, Ontario Federation of Indian Friendship Centres. South Central Ontario Social Planning and Research Council of Hamilton-Wentworth (Hamilton); Eastern Ontario Social Planning Council of Ottawa-Carleton (Ottawa), Ottawa-Carleton CPAG (Ottawa), Children's Aid Society of Ottawa-Carleton (Ottawa); Hastings & Prince Edward Legal Services (Belleville); South Western Ontario Southwestern Ontario CPAG (London), Legal Assistance of Windsor (Windsor), Child Poverty Action 2000 – Niagara (St. Catharines); Northern Ontario Lakehead Social Planning Council (Thunder Bay), Laurentian University (Sudbury), The Planning & Coordination Committee of Grey/Bruce – Serving Children and Youth (Grey Bruce); Office of Social Affairs – Diocese of Sault Ste-Marie (North Bay) Central Ontario The Children's Aid Society of Toronto, Metro Campaign 2000 (Toronto), The Community Social Planning Council (Toronto), York Region Poverty Action Group (Toronto), Somali Multi-Service Centre, Halton Social Planning Council (Burlington), Social Planning Council of Peel (Mississauga), Peterborough Social Planning Council (Peterborough), Durham Child Poverty Committee (Ajax), 905 Interfaith Leaders, Family Service Association of Toronto, Child Care Research and Resource Unit - University of Toronto.*

