



October 7, 2010

Open letter to:

The Right Honourable Stephen Harper, Prime Minister,
The Honourable Jim Flaherty, Minister of Finance, and
The Honourable Diane Finley, Minister for Human Resources and Skills Development

Dear Ministers:

The Good Jobs for All Coalition has mobilized and lobbied for Employment Insurance (EI) reform over the past two years so that laid off workers are not left out in the cold.

The October 4th release of the “2010 Toronto Vital Signs report” by the Toronto Community Foundation has now confirmed some of our worst fears about the devastating impact of job loss on Toronto residents.

It is heartbreaking to learn that almost half of the new food bank users in the GTA came because of job losses and reduced work hours.

With Toronto unemployment averaging 10% in 2009, and over 9% throughout 2010, there is an urgent need for the Federal government to continue with the following threatened EI measures:

1. A 5 week EI extension for all workers;
2. EI-benefit extensions of up to 20 weeks for long tenure workers; and
3. Universal application of all pilot projects (14 best weeks benefit calculation, 40% allowable when working on claim, new entrant/re-entrants at 840 hours).

In addition to these measures, the Good Jobs for All Coalition is calling for a comprehensive EI reform package that includes: reducing the number of hours someone needs to work to qualify for EI to 360 hours; increasing benefits from 55% to 60% of regular earnings; and extending benefits by an additional 50 weeks whenever national unemployment exceeds 6%.

The fact remains that less than 40% of laid off workers in Toronto receive EI benefits due to the stringent eligibility criteria and reduced benefit duration.

The Vital Signs report provides a sobering picture of the growing number of Torontonians who have fallen between the cracks. It's time for the Federal government to respond to this urgent need and provide EI for unemployed workers when they need it most.

We need action now.

Sincerely,



Winnie Ng
Co-Chair, Good Jobs for All Coalition



Tam Goossen
Co-Chair, Good Jobs for All Coalition

Cc:

David Miller, Mayor of Toronto
Michael Ignatieff, Leader of the Liberal Party
Dalton McGuinty, Premier of Ontario
Gilles Duceppe, Leader of the Bloc Québécois Party
Jack Layton, Leader of the NDP

Included:

A list of organizations that are members of the Good Jobs for All Coalition.

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