

## An Open Letter to Federal Ministers and Members of Parliament

November 12, 2021

### This is an Urgent Call to Extend COVID Recovery Benefits and take Early Action on Permanent Reforms to Employment Insurance

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The following organizations call on the Federal Government to immediately:

#### 1. Extend the Canada Recovery Benefit retroactively from October 23, until there is a more complete recovery from COVID.

Almost one million workers applied for CRB benefits in the first half of October (943,300 at Oct 9) with more retroactive claims to come. They were in need of these benefits - people without work or with significantly reduced hours of work and earnings. They include those not eligible for EI or those who have finished their EI benefits.

COVID is still very much with us. It is still impacting jobs and work schedules, including those affected by supply chain challenges and a slow return to full capacity services and production. These benefits do not disappear down a drain; they are spent in our communities and help local economies to weather the COVID storm and aftermath.

The government should also restore the \$500 benefit and provide repayment amnesty for low-income claimants who received federal COVID benefits.

#### 2. Take early action on permanent reforms to Employment Insurance.

We urgently need key improvements such as:

- ✓ **Better access:** a 360 hour/12-week qualifying rule, 50 week duration, an end to harsh disqualifications, more access for migrants and misclassified self-employed
- ✓ **Improved benefit rates,** now at historic lows, and including a guaranteed minimum
- ✓ **New annual Federal contributions to EI** to help pay for improvements and ensure EI acts as an automatic economic stabilizer at times of crisis.

#### *On behalf of the following 58 organizations (at Nov 12, 2021):*

- Access Alliance Multicultural Health & Community Services
- ACORN Canada
- Alberta Federation of Labour
- Anglican Diocese of Niagara
- Atkinson Foundation
- BC Employment Standards Coalition
- Campaign 2000: End Child and Family Poverty
- Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives

- Canadian Federation of Students Ontario
- Canadian Feminist Alliance for International Action (FAFIA)
- Canadian Labour Congress
- Canadian Union of Public Employees (CUPE-National)
- Centre for Future Work
- Chatham-Kent Legal Clinic
- Chinese Canadian National Council - Toronto
- Community Legal Assistance Sarnia
- Community Legal Assistance Society (British Columbia)
- Dignidad Mlgrante Society (DIGNIDAD)
- Downtown Legal Services
- Elgin-Oxford Legal Clinic
- Fish, Food & Allied Workers - Unifor
- Good Jobs for All Coalition
- HIV & AIDS Legal Clinic Ontario
- Income Security Advocacy Centre
- Justice for Workers
- Justicia for Migrant Workers
- Labour Community Services
- Manitoba Federation of Labour
- Migrant Rights Network
- Mouvement autonome et solidaire des sans-emploi (MASSE)
- Neighbourhood Legal Services (London and Middlesex)
- Neighbourhood Legal Services Toronto
- New Brunswick Federation of Labour
- Newfoundland and Labrador Federation of Labour
- Nova Scotia Federation of Labour
- OCASI - Ontario Council of Agencies Serving Immigrants
- Ontario Community Legal Clinics EI Working Group
- Ontario Federation of Labour
- Ontario Secondary School Teachers' Federation (OSSTF/FEESO)
- Open Policy Ontario
- Parkdale Activity – Recreation Centre
- Parkdale Community Legal Services
- PEI Federation of Labour
- Rights of Non-Status Women's Network
- Saskatchewan Federation of Labour
- Social Justice Cooperative NL
- Social Planning and Research Council of Hamilton
- Social Planning Council of Winnipeg
- South Asian Women's Rights Organization
- Steelworkers' Toronto Area Council
- Toronto and York Region Labour Council
- UNIFOR
- Vancouver & District Labour Council
- Warden Woods Community Centre
- West Coast LEAF
- West Scarborough Community Legal Services
- Windsor-Essex Bilingual Legal Clinic
- Workers' Action Centre