



The Honourable Carla Qualtrough,  
Minister of Employment, Workforce Development and Disability Inclusion

January 24, 2020

*Dear Minister Qualtrough:*

We want to congratulate you on your recent appointment to this important Ministry which includes responsibility for Employment Insurance, one of the country's most significant social insurance programs.

We also want to express to you how disappointed we have been to see the lack of commitment to improving access to EI benefits.

A review focused on improving access was the key EI commitment in this government's previous Parliament when the Minister responsible for EI was mandated to undertake "*a broad review of the EI system with the goal of modernizing our system of income support for unemployed workers that leaves too many workers with no unemployment insurance safety net*".

It is also the one EI commitment the government failed to act on.

We see this review as your most urgent and important task in 2020.

EI recipient rates are stuck at historic lows, in large part because of dramatic changes in the job market that particularly impact women, racialized workers, those with disabilities and those in precarious employment. It should not be surprising then that recipient rates in big cities are among the worst in the country. As a coalition, we represent more than 30 community, labour and environmental organizations in the Greater Toronto Area.

We note that Parliament's HUMA Committee also recommended that "Employment and Social Development Canada review and reform Employment Insurance to better support workers in precarious employment including those in self-employment. To this end, reforms must consider: reducing the number of hours worked required to qualify; increasing the amount of the benefit for workers with low earnings;" etc. (Recommendation #3, HUMA report "*Precarious Work: Understanding the changing Nature of Work in Canada*").

If you can meet in Toronto, we would appreciate an opportunity to discuss how real progress might be made on the commitment to a review and a focus on expanding access to EI.

Respectfully,

*Tam Goossen and Carolyn Egan*, Co-chairs, Good Jobs for All Coalition

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Copies: The Right Hon. Justin Trudeau, Prime Minister; Opposition EI critics; EI Commissioners.