



Coalition Canada
basic income
revenu de base

January 19, 2026

Re: Submission by Coalition Canada to the Senate Standing Committee on National Finance in support of Bill S-206, “An Act to develop a national framework for a guaranteed livable basic income”.

Dear Members of the Senate Standing Committee on National Finance,

At this critical juncture in our history, Canadians need your support to ensure that everyone has sufficient income to meet their basic needs and live with dignity. Developing a framework to implement a livable guaranteed basic income (GBI) for Canada is an important first step towards proactively promoting the health and well-being of Canadians, boosting economies, reducing crime, and enhancing trust in government. This is why we at **Coalition Canada Basic Income-Revenu de Base (Coalition Canada)** strongly urge you to support Bill S-206, “An Act to develop a national framework for a guaranteed livable basic income”.

Coalition Canada is a cross-country alliance of provincial, territorial, and local networks and individuals that work at the indigenous, municipal, provincial, territorial, and federal levels to promote the implementation of a livable GBI across Canada for all who need it.

The Time Is Now

Canadians are suffering. Food banks were meant to be a temporary measure, yet food insecurity and food bank use is at an all-time high. Housing costs are soaring and access to non-market housing options are limited. Salaries are not keeping pace with inflation. Crimes of desperation (e.g., shop-lifting) are on the rise and it is telling that one of the most frequently shop-lifted items is [baby formula](#). A growing number of Canadians can find only temporary or part-time work with few benefits and protections. A poor farming or fishing season, a sudden health problem, loss of a job, a flood or fire—any number of disasters that befall Canadians could throw them into poverty.

We are not making progress in eradicating poverty. Canada has failed to meet the commitment it made in 2015 to eradicate poverty and leave no one behind when it signed onto the UN Sustainable Goals. While OAS/GIS and CCB have helped, poverty rates are [high \(10.2%\) and rising](#). The current welfare system is insufficient, often keeping people in deep poverty, making demeaning and intrusive demands on recipients. As the 2025 [Report of the National Advisory Council on Poverty](#) emphasized, there is an “urgent need for a guaranteed income floor to ensure everyone can live with dignity, regardless of their income source”. Current estimates indicate that opportunity costs, remedial costs and intergenerational costs of keeping people in

poverty in Canada are over \$90 billion per year. We could save much of those costs by acting proactively with a livable GBI.

A GBI fits within Budget 2025 priorities. The federal 2025 budget prioritized “investing to build major nation-building projects that are in our national interest”. **By investing directly in the economic capacity of Canadians, a livable GBI would be an unparalleled, unifying project—for Canadians impacted by tariffs, technological disruption, environmental disasters and degradation, and other risks that any of us could face.** A country where people look out for each other is harder to divide and easier to mobilize for common goals.

PEI is ready. Bill S-206 stipulates that, when developing the content of a national framework, the respective jurisdictional responsibilities of various levels of government be considered (3.3) and consultations be completed with federal and provincial/territorial ministers as well as Indigenous governing bodies and stakeholders (3.2). It is notable that much of this work has already been completed in the province of PEI and **a federal-provincial working group has been formed to consider a feasible and affordable model for implementation island-wide. This model has the support of the grassroots, Indigenous governments, and all political parties in PEI. PEI, therefore, with further federal-provincial collaboration, is poised to begin the implementation of a GBI in Canada.**

Evidence for a GBI

Considerable research has shown that a GBI would benefit not only those who receive it, but our Canadian society more generally. It would save societal costs by increasing the health of recipients, thereby reducing the need for doctor and hospital visits. It would alleviate feelings of stress and desperation, positively impact crime rates and save money on policing and incarceration costs. It would circumvent the need for foodbanks, shelters, and other by now perennial stop-gap measures. It would provide choices for people— to risk entrepreneurial ventures, to learn new skills, to provide care for loved ones when needed, or to grow their art or music. Because recipients would spend their benefits near home, a GBI would benefit and potentially grow local economies. Interestingly, a GBI has also been shown to increase people’s trust in government and our democratic institutions, something that sometimes seems sorely lacking today. Senator Pate’s Fact Sheet Series entitled “[Spend Less on Poverty Invest More in People](#)” provides much useful evidence for the effects of a GBI and responds to many frequently raised concerns.

One of the concerns often raised is—can we afford it? The better question is: can we afford NOT to do it. If a key focus of our government is to increase productivity and build a stronger economy, we need to acknowledge that our current welfare systems are failing us. The cost of a GBI would be offset by reduced welfare costs and downstream savings. With crises such as doctor shortages, ER wait times, homelessness, food insecurity, incarceration rate and costs, we must focus our attention on prevention and health promotion. We can no longer stand by as people are forced to make impossible choices--rent or food, food or heat... We can no longer

allow 10.2% and more of our population to suffer through our policy failures and be left out of our economy. Nation building should include everyone. We must act now.

Conclusion

In conclusion, Coalition Canada urges you most strongly to support Bill S-206, “An Act to develop a national framework for a guaranteed livable basic income”, a truly visionary route to helping Canadians, all Canadians, live decently.

Thank you for your kind consideration.

Sincerely,

Elizabeth (Mandy) Kay-Raining Bird, Luc Gosselin, and Susan Abells, on behalf of Coalition Canada Basic Income-revenu de base

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