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## **Statement: BC Expert Panel Recommends Too Little, Too Late on Basic Income**

*FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE*

OTTAWA, FRIDAY, JANUARY 29, 2021—The report of the BC Expert Panel on Basic Income recommends much needed steps toward basic income for Canadians living in poverty but designs them to provide too little and too late.

The report rightly identifies that single, working-aged adults, including single parents, are most likely to be marginalized and left behind due to gaps in federal supports and the indignities and inadequacies of provincial and territorial social assistance and disability support programs. Yet it recommends continuing to slowly tinker with this patchwork of programs that we know, by design, will leave people in need still falling through the cracks.

The report highlights that guaranteed livable basic income is not a stand-alone solution. Certainly, it must work alongside robust social programs and policies to ensure, among other necessities, effective labour standards, accessible and affordable housing, and comprehensive healthcare, education and childcare. This should not devalue the merits of guaranteed livable basic income or any other component of a strong social, health and economic safety net that will create the supportive and mutually beneficial communities outlined by the report.

The report notes the abundance of existing data on the short-term benefits of guaranteed livable basic income. It thereby confirms that there is little value in further testing or piloting the concept and that the time for the implementation of permanent programs is now.

Instead of a bold and vital step, however, the report recommends incremental change: a series of “targeted” basic incomes for those most in need, including persons with disabilities, women escaping violence and youth transitioning out of the care of the state, coupled with less stringent restrictions on access to existing social assistance. It is clear that step by step, this will gradually lead closer and closer to a guaranteed livable basic income and the types of inclusive social, economic and health safety net advocated by basic income advocates, as well as the Royal Commission on the Status of Women, the Senate’s Croll Report and current Senate Finance Committee, not to mention the Truth and Reconciliation Commission and the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls.

What the report regrettably fails to underscore is that the one in ten living in poverty cannot afford and may not survive the wait.

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