



Freedom 90 commits to raising its voice to demand an end to poverty and an end to the need for food banks and emergency meal programs in Ontario.

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Freedom 90 Newsletter February 16, 2016

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[The Hamilton Spectator - Carmela Fragomeni](#)

Poverty levels no better than 10 years ago

"Unfortunately, it is a sad reality that the lives of people living in deepest poverty has not changed," said Tom Cooper, director of the Roundtable for Poverty Reduction.



Cooper added people living in poverty face more challenges than 10 years ago — higher rents, fewer vacancies for low-income earners, homeless shelters at capacity, longer subsidized housing waiting lists, increased food bank needs, and tighter eligibilities for employment insurance making it difficult to access.

Cooper said it's shameful that the provincial government has "institutionalized poverty and food banks" by making them permanent realities for those on social assistance.

It's frustrating that despite years of advocating for anti-poverty measures that Hamilton — and Canada — still experiences high levels of poverty, he said.

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February 5, 2016

[The Globe and Mail - Bill Curry](#)

Minister eyes guaranteed minimum income to tackle poverty

The federal minister responsible for reducing poverty says he is interested in the idea of a guaranteed income in Canada.



Veteran economist Jean-Yves Duclos, who is Minister of Families, Children and Social Development, told The Globe and Mail the concept has merit as a policy to consider after the government implements more immediate reforms promised during the election campaign.

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[ricochet - Ianik Marcil](#)

Is Quebec's guaranteed minimum income a Trojan horse?

That a neoliberal government like the one we have in Quebec,  which has sought by all means since coming to power to reduce the size and role of the state, is suddenly enthusiastic about a guaranteed minimum income should arouse suspicion. Like they say, the devil is in the details, and that's where we should focus our attention.

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[Norfolk News - Victoria Gray](#)

Target poverty to eliminate food insecurity: health unit

Haldimand-Norfolk has the worst record for food insecurity in Ontario, and health officials want more done to fight poverty locally.

Laura Goyette, a dietitian with the Haldimand-Norfolk Health Unit, urged Norfolk councillors at last week's board of health meeting to get behind a movement to change the way organizations deal with food insecurity.



"We need to move away from food charity," Goyette said in a phone interview

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[North Bay Now](#)

Healthy eating: a low income struggle

Access to healthy food continues to be a problem for many low income people in our district. The Cost of Healthy Eating Report 2015 shows that a family of four receiving Ontario Works spends about 90% of their monthly income on rent and food. This leaves only \$200 for utilities, clothing, toiletries, transportation, school costs, childcare, phone, etc.



The Board of Health passed a resolution last night calling on the provincial government to prioritize the investigation of a basic income guarantee. This income security program would ensure a basic income for all, indexed to inflation, regardless of employment status.

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January 23, 2016

[Norfolk News](#)

Lean times ahead as cost of food to rise

What is food security? As defined at the 1996 World Food Summit, "food security exists when all people, at all times, have physical and economic access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food to meet their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life."



Studies indicate that the poorer a person is, the more likely that person is to have anxiety, high blood pressure and health conditions like heart disease.

The consequences of food insecurity are worrying from humanitarian and policy perspectives. People who don't have proper diets get sick more often, making it harder to keep a job and apartment, and taxing the health-care system. Children who grow up hungry are behind the eight ball when it comes to how they will do at school and how healthy they will be into adulthood.

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February 2, 2016

[rabble.ca - Raksha Vasudevan](#)

Need for national food policy intensifies as costs soar and food insecurity remains

While the average Canadian spends only 10 per cent of their income on food, low income households may spend as much as 75 per cent. So, naturally, when food prices go up, those least able to deal with the financial shock are often the hardest hit.



In response, some well-meaning activists urge us to carry on the "giving spirit of the holidays" into the new year by donating to food banks and other social service agencies ..."

However, this sort of philanthropy is dangerous. As Alberta Views magazine argued so well, private support to such charities allows the government to avoid fulfilling its responsibilities of providing basic services. This forces already vulnerable groups to rely on the funding "whims" of individual wealthy citizens -- which seems completely unnatural but has come to be accepted and even encouraged by initiatives such as food bank drives.

Just as we would not accept that someone's ability to visit the doctor when ill or the right of a child to attend school should be left to other people's generosity, the better-off should not be determining if and what the poorest eat.

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