



MEDIA RELEASE

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### **Ontario Budget – Little Help for Low Income Families**

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**Toronto** – The 2010 Ontario Budget includes much needed funding to save child care services for low income families, but little else that will bring down child and family poverty rates in Ontario. This budget basically means we are treading water and not moving forward with any new income supports and services that low income families need.

“Kudos to the Premier for doing the right thing to avoid a child care catastrophe. Permanent funding of \$63.5 million will relieve low income parents so that they can work or go to school. Now we need investments to fully implement the Early Learning Program - and we need to get the federal government on board,” said Laurel Rothman, National Coordinator of Campaign 2000.

The budget included only a 1% increase to social assistance rates, and an announcement to change the special diet program over the next few months into a nutritional supplement program administered by the Ministry of Health.

“The special diet program now supports some of the most vulnerable in our communities – people with chronic illnesses like cancer who are struggling to survive on social assistance. We’re concerned that changes which could weaken this program will exacerbate poverty and suffering,” said Jacquie Maund, Coordinator of Ontario Campaign 2000.

“The change we need to see is a transformed social assistance program that supports people to move permanently out of poverty. We continue to call for a \$100/month Healthy Food Supplement, and public consultations as part of the social assistance review promised under the Poverty Reduction Strategy,” commented Jacquie Maund.

Ontario Campaign 2000 has long called for measures to increase access to affordable housing and good jobs as components of an effective poverty reduction strategy. The 2010 budget included welcome new funding of \$6million to reduce the backlog of employment standards claims by workers, but no new announcements on housing spending.

If the government is to achieve its target to cut child poverty in Ontario by 25% by 2013 it will need to keep investing to expand child care services, introduce a Housing Benefit for low income tenants, transform social assistance to support people to move out of poverty, and develop a Good Jobs strategy.

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*Ontario Campaign 2000 is a non partisan coalition of 66 partner organizations working to end child and family poverty in Ontario. [www.campaign2000.ca](http://www.campaign2000.ca)*