

Embargo: 00:01, September 27, 2011

END CHILD & FAMILY POVERTY IN CANADA

## Political Parties Called to Act on Poverty

**Toronto, September 27, 2011** – Ontario's political parties have offered limited solutions this election to ending child and family poverty, a new report by Ontario Campaign 2000 has found.

The “Political Commitment Grid” released today by Ontario Campaign 2000 evaluates each of Ontario’s four major political parties’ plans on poverty reduction and eradication. Most party platforms mention poverty reduction strategies, but some parties still fail to make extensive commitments on critical issues that affect people living on low income and in poverty.

“All political parties committed to poverty reduction in their unanimous support for the 2009 Poverty Reduction Act, but their political commitments so far this election are underwhelming,” said Mike Creek, co-Chair of the 25 in 5 Network for Poverty Reduction. “Now more than ever we call upon all political parties to act to build an Ontario where everyone lives in dignity.”

The Grid informs a Call to Action letter from the 25 in 5 Network for Poverty Reduction, which spearheaded the call for poverty reduction in 2007. The letter calls on party leaders to act on their commitment to poverty reduction, and to pursue strong and comprehensive policies aimed at achieving an equitable and inclusive Ontario and a province free from poverty. The Call to Action has received endorsement from over a hundred organizations and individuals across Ontario.

“As communities work hard to remove barriers and provide supports for our most vulnerable residents, now is the time for all parties to demonstrate their leadership by outlining a clear plan of action on eradicating poverty, said Adam Vasey, Director of Pathway to Potential in Windsor. “Nearly 1.7million Ontarians – one in ten of us – live in poverty. Ontarians are counting on their political leaders to clearly articulate their vision for an equitable, inclusive province that ensures opportunity and dignity for everyone.”

“We not only want all parties to acknowledge these issues, we want them to bring in policies and set comprehensive targets now for achieving poverty eradication in the future,” said Alizeh Hussain, Interim Coordinator of Ontario Campaign 2000. “It should be unacceptable that 4 in 5 children in Ontario do not have access to licensed affordable child care, over 150,000 households are on waiting lists for non-profit housing, and 40% of food bank users say they go hungry at least one day a week. We need to know what the parties will do about these critical issues.”

“Now more than ever we need parties to address poverty, as it affects everyone and it’s the right thing to do for our social and economic well being,” said Greg deGroot-Maggetti of Mennonite Central Committee in Kitchener. “Firm commitments on poverty eradication would give everyone a secure foundation and strengthen Ontario’s economic outlook. It can’t be stressed enough how crucial it is that all parties act on eradicating poverty in Ontario.”

### Notes for Editors

- Ontario Campaign 2000's Political Grid is based on party platforms, party commitments made in the media, and responses received from the four major parties on their poverty reduction, affordable housing, education, child care and employment strategies.
- Ontario Campaign 2000 is a non partisan cross Canada coalition of more than 60 organizations committed to ending child & family poverty in Canada. Visit [www.campaign2000.ca](http://www.campaign2000.ca) for general info & all election-related materials. Ontario Campaign 2000 is a project of Family Service Toronto.
- The 25 in 5 Network for Poverty Reduction is a coalition that is endorsed by 1500 groups and individuals from across Ontario committed to a strong and effective Ontario poverty reduction plan. Visit <http://25in5.ca/> for more information.

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