



## Campaign 2000 Federal Lobby 2010

### Meeting with Your MP: The Five Steps

#### Objectives:

- Ensure that MPs recognize the importance of the federal role in poverty reduction and agree to raise it as a topic of discussion with their colleagues when caucus reconvenes.
- Encourage MPs to commit to support Bill C 545 which obligates the federal government develop and implement a strategy to eradicate poverty in Canada and Bill C-304 An Act to ensure secure, adequate, accessible and affordable housing for Canadians
- To ensure that poverty reduction is part of the election platform of each political party in the next election expected within 6 – 12 months.

#### Step #1: Choose Who Will Go

- Choose 2-4 representatives that reflect the community. You might include:
  - A long-time staff member or volunteer who can speak knowledgeably about the work of Campaign 2000 and the issue of child and family poverty nationally;
  - An activist or community leader who can speak about child poverty locally;
  - A parent or community member whose family life has been touched by poverty.

#### Step# 2: Arrange a Meeting with Your MP

- Arrange an appointment with your MP's office while they are in their riding (July through early September)
- State that you represent Campaign 2000 and want to meet to discuss child and family poverty in Canada, and in your riding. You have specific recommendations for a national anti-poverty strategy. Request a one-hour meeting.
- Fax the MP's office before meeting to state who will attend, and confirm time and place. Call the day before to confirm the meeting.

#### Step #3: Brief Your Team

- MP Background: Gather any available information about your MP.
- **Detailed Plan for Meeting:** Decide who will say what. Identify a chair person to help with the flow from one section to the next, to keep track of time, to summarize the MP's comments and to say thank you. Have a plan so that even if the meeting is shortened to 15 minutes, all of the key points will be covered. Bring copy of latest Provincial and National Report Cards (available from [www.campaign2000.ca](http://www.campaign2000.ca))
- On the day of the presentation meet a little early (~15 minutes) to review the presentation and settle any last minute questions.
- Remember to allow ample time for your MP to respond to your concerns.



## Step# 4: The Meeting Itself



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### When the day of the meeting comes...

#### Do

- ✓ Be on time.
- ✓ Expect your MP to be late.
- ✓ Expect to receive only half the time you were allotted.
- ✓ If your MP is a Minister, call him/her "Minister" when you speak to him/her.
- ✓ Inform your MP that other representatives of Campaign 2000 are talking to MPs across Canada.
- ✓ Take copies of Report Card.
- ✓ Keep an eye on the time so that the MP has opportunity to express opinions and commit to follow-up.

#### Don't

- ❖ Don't bring anyone with you who isn't necessary to your presentation.
- ❖ Don't introduce any unexpected topics into the meeting.
- ❖ Don't assume that your MP will know everything or even anything about child poverty.
- ❖ Be persuasive - don't be argumentative.

### 4A. Introduction

- Introduce members of your team, with their titles, affiliation to organizations or role (e.g. concerned parent) and explain briefly their connection to Campaign 2000 or the issue of child and family poverty.
- "Campaign 2000 is composed of over 120 partner organizations across Canada, representing hundreds of thousands of Canadians." Take a copy of latest Report Card which has the partners' list. "Campaign 2000 released its first Report Card on Child Poverty in 1992, and have been doing one annually since then. We also release discussion papers which highlight policy issues. We meet regularly in Ottawa and at provincial levels with bureaucrats, elected representatives, Cabinet Ministers and media."
- "We are here today to talk to you about child and family poverty - a critical issue that affects our community and country. Addressing child poverty is a stated priority of the federal government. MPs of all political parties supported resolutions of November 24, 1989 and 2009 and to urge action:

***"That, with November 24th, 2009 marking the 20th anniversary of the 1989 unanimous resolution of this House to eliminate poverty among Canadian children by the year 2000, and not having achieved that goal, be it resolved that the Government of Canada, taking into consideration the Committee's work in this regard, and respecting provincial and territorial jurisdiction, develop an immediate plan to eliminate poverty in Canada for all."***

- If the MP is a member of the government (Conservative), then we would start with: "We know that the government has many pressures but the issue of child and family poverty requires attention. Children in Canada need your help to bring this proposal forward. We are asking you to communicate with the Minister of Finance, Minister of Human Resources & Social Development, Minister of Health, Minister of Labour, the Prime Minister, and all of your colleagues at caucus meetings to urge them to make children a part of the government agenda."

If they are a member of an opposition party, ask them to raise this issue within their caucus.



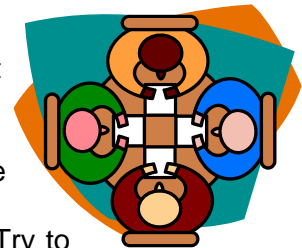
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## 4B. Detailed Presentation

- You can divide this between your team members. We have divided the presentation into 5 short sections.
- One possible format for your presentation could be:
  - I. The state of child and family poverty nationally, and in your province/riding
  - II. Call to support Bill C-545 *An Act to Eliminate Poverty in Canada* which obligates the federal government to eliminate poverty and promote social inclusion by establishing and implementing a strategy for poverty elimination
  - III. Call to increase the child benefit to \$5,400 to assist parents with the cost of raising a child; & Call to increase minimum wages, and why
  - IV. Call to re-assert federal leadership including significant federal funding to provinces and territories for a publicly-managed universal early childhood education and child care system; Call to Pass Bill C-304, the *Secure, Adequate, Accessible and Affordable Housing Act*; Call to improve access to post-secondary education by increasing the student financial aid package, increase access to post secondary education
  - V. Conclusion

## 4C. Closing

- You may choose to ask your MP to formally respond to these 4 questions, and you record his/her answers for the record:
  - 1- ***Do you support government investments in a mix of social policies – child care, social housing, income supports and labour market initiatives – as an effective way to reduce child and family poverty?***
  - 2- ***Do you support raising the child benefit to a maximum of \$5,400/child?***
  - 3- ***Do you support re-instating the federal minimum wage to at least \$11. per hour as an example for the provinces?***
  - 4- ***Will you commit to raising the issue of child and family poverty in Canada in your caucus, and getting back to us regarding the discussion?***
- Record their answers and please share them with the Campaign 2000 office as part of your meeting evaluation.
- Leave time for questions, discussion.
- If your MP raises a question that you cannot answer, tell your MP that you will get back to him/her with more information. Follow through on this. If you require resources to do so contact us.
- Listen to concerns, comments and provide a response, but don't be argumentative.
- Ask your MP's opinion and clarify what action steps he/she will take. Try to get a commitment from the MP that they will raise child and family issues when his/her Caucus reconvenes and if appropriate ask if he/she will help make them an important part of the upcoming session.
- If they are a member of the Conservative government, ask them if they will speak to the Minister of Health, Minister of HRSDC, Minister of Labour, Minister of Finance, the PM, other MPs? If they are a member of NDP, Reform, Liberal, or BQ, will they join their colleagues in pushing for support for Bills C 545 and C-304 and for 'down payments in the next federal budget?'
- If your MP is not on-side, make your best case but don't do anything to alienate him/her. If the disagreement is a matter of details, try for an agreement in principle. If the disagreement is a matter of approach, try for an agreement in objectives.





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## **Step #5 – Follow up**

- Complete the attached evaluation form while everything is still fresh in your mind. If possible do so as a group. The more detailed the information the better.
- Fax or email the evaluation form to Attn: Liyu Guo, Fax: 416-595-0242 or by email at: [liyugu@familyservicetoronto.org](mailto:liyugu@familyservicetoronto.org) so we can update our records.



- Send a thank-you note to your MP along with any information you may have promised to get for him/her.
- Ask for a contact person in the MP's office and maintain an ongoing connection with your MP: send him/her new information on child poverty, newspaper clippings about child poverty, copies of letters of support from other organizations, copies of letters to the editor, etc.