

All Party Committee on Basic Income
Meeting #1 Minutes – November 24, 2022
2:00pm – 4:00pm
CSSD Boardroom

In attendance:

Hon. John Abbott - Minister, Children, Seniors and Social Development (Chair)

Hon. Bernard Davis - Minister Responsible for Labour

Sherry Gambin-Walsh - MHA, Placentia – St. Mary's

Jim Dinn – MHA, St. John's Centre

Craig Pardy – MHA, Bonavista

Aisling Gogan, ADM, Children, Seniors and Social Development

Scott Fleming - Policy Analyst, Third Party Caucus

Bradley George - Executive Assistant to Minister John Abbott

Patti McCarthy – Policy Analyst, Children, Seniors and Social Development

1. Presentation – Background and Context

- The Chair provided the Committee with an overview of the background and context for the All-Party Committee.
- ADM Gogan presented on the following:
 - Basic Income – universal, guaranteed or targeted
 - CSSD-led work related to basic income, including:
 - Review of the Income Support Program
 - Social and Economic Well-Being Plan
 - New Targeted Basic Income for Youth Services Clients
 - Income Support Employment Stability Pilot
 - Health Accord
 - The Canadian context regarding Basic Income – Advocacy groups, Bill C-22 and Bill S-233.
 - Reports and past pilots - There have been pilot approaches to Basic Income, but there has been no long-term implementation to assess. Therefore, there is no single recommended approach based on best practice. Targeted and incremental approaches are showing success.
 - Cost considerations for various Basic Income programs – review of estimates to date by:
 - The Parliamentary Budget Officer
 - Basic Income NL
 - Basic Income Canada Network
 - Low Income prevalence in NL:
 - Low-income prevalence has declined from 18.9% in 2003 to 13.1% in 2019. Single parents have the highest prevalence of low income across all family types, as do women across almost all age groups.
 - It is anticipated that the 2020 data will show a significant decrease in the poverty rate for that year due to pandemic-related benefits.
 - Provincial and Federal income-tested programs.

- Following the presentation, the Committee discussed:
 - Calculation of the Market Basket Measure (MBM) - Canada's Official Poverty Line.
 - Provincial food insecurity.
 - Provincial minimum wage.
 - Potential impact of basic income on other supports and benefits.
 - Ensuring that a basic income program does not discourage labour force attachment.
 - Identifying a way to account for all supports, including wrap around supports, that individuals receive, and how these factor into determining the income level and how it compares to the MBM.
 - Encouraging the filing of income taxes to ensure that individuals receive all the benefits for which they are eligible.
 - Potential for overall future savings following implementation of a basic income program.

2. Review of Draft Terms of Reference (Handout)

- The Committee decided to review the Terms of Reference individually and provide feedback to Aisling within the next couple of days.
- The Terms of Reference stated that the committee would aim to achieve its goals within 6-8 months. Some committee members felt that this timeframe might be a challenge, given the work of the committee. The timeframe may need to be adjusted.

3. Work Plan

- Consultation with experts
 - Sheila Regehr is a subject matter expert who will be joining the committee in person on December 12, 2022.
 - The committee was encouraged to provide suggestions for inviting other experts to meetings.
- Summary of Existing Consultations: what we can learn from work that has already been completed:
 - Health Accord consultations.
 - Social and Economic Well-Being Plan consultations.
 - Income Support review.
 - Internal government consultation.

4. Communications

- The Committee reviewed and approved a draft news release.

5. Monthly Meeting Schedule

- The next meeting is scheduled for Monday, December 12th, 2022.
 - The committee suggested Friday meetings going forward.