



RE: Standing Senate Committee on National Finance’s Study of Bill S-233

May 29, 2023

The following submission from Coalition Canada Basic Income – revenu de base, a pan-Canadian organization of advocates in support of the implementation of a Guaranteed Livable Basic Income (GLBI) in Canada, **recommends that the Standing Senate Committee on National Finance support Bill S-233, *An Act to develop a national framework for a guaranteed livable basic income***, and send it to third reading as soon as possible.

A GLBI is not a UBI. That means, it is not paid to everyone, but is income tested. It provides an income floor beneath everyone’s feet that eliminates the risk of falling into poverty should disaster strike. A GLBI should be **sufficient** to allow people to live a life with dignity, security, and the ability to afford necessities. A GLBI must **be accessible** to those who need it; based solely on the **conditions of income and residency**; **respect the autonomy of individuals and indigenous peoples**, avoid stigmatization and overly burdensome oversight; **complement** the other elements of our social safety net, and **be both reliable and flexible**, thus changing as income rises or falls. These foundational [principles of a GLBI](#) are in line with the GLBI called for in Bill S-233.

Coalition Canada and its members are encouraged by and support key elements of this legislation. More specifically:

We recommend the development of a GLBI for working-aged adults (ages 18-64), including temporary workers, permanent residents, and refugee claimants. This would make it easier to align with the existing benefits, including those 'basic income-like' benefits for Seniors (OAS and GIS) and for parents (CCB), and the forthcoming Canada Disability Benefit.

- We support the recommended consultation process.
- We support the development of measures identified in the Bill to:
 - Determine what constitutes a livable income for each region of Canada. We support use of a measure that a) is sufficient to meet peoples’ basic needs, b) does not disadvantage anyone based on household composition or region of residence, c) is respectful of the right to self-determination and unique needs of indigenous groups, and d) is adjusted to changing economic realities over time.
 - Create national standards for health and social supports that complement and guide a GLBI in every province.
 - Ensure that GLBI is not tied to education, training, or participation in the labour market requirements.

- Ensure the implementation of a GLBI does not result in a decrease in services or other benefits meant to meet an individual's exceptional needs related to health or disability.

As the Committee studies this important legislation, Coalition Canada urges members of the committee to consider important new developments supporting GLBI in Canada.

Many jurisdictions are calling for the implementation of a GLBI. Over the last year, municipalities from coast to coast have called for their provincial governments to work with the federal government to implement a GLBI. [The Union of Municipalities of British Columbia](#); the [City of St. John's, NL](#); [Saint John](#), [Moncton](#), [Fredericton](#), [Miramichi](#), and [Edmundston](#) in NB; and [Halifax Regional Municipality](#), [Pictou County](#), County of [Annapolis](#), [Antigonish](#), and Wolfville in NS are among the local governments who have passed resolutions for a GLBI in the last year alone. This comes after the Final Report of the Special Committee on Poverty in PEI [recommended the implementation of a GLBI in 2020](#), while now an [all-party committee examines the feasibility of a GLBI in Newfoundland and Labrador](#). [The Human Rights Commission of Newfoundland and Labrador](#) has also called for the implementation of a guaranteed livable basic income.

National Indigenous Organizations support a GLBI. Last Spring, before the Standing Senate Committee on Aboriginal Affairs, representatives of the Assembly of First Nations, Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami, and the Metis National Council all voiced their support for a GLBI ([APPA, April 25, 2022, 15:44:58](#)). Implementation of a GLBI is also explicitly stated in Calls for Justice 4.5 and 16.2 of the Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls report.

Business communities are voicing support. The nature of work and the workforce is evolving rapidly. This is why over [150 Canadian CEO's](#) have called for the implementation of a basic income, the [Canadian Women's Chamber of Commerce](#) supports a basic income, and the [Canadian Chamber of Commerce](#) has supported further study on a basic income.

GLBI has the potential to dramatically impact the health and well-being of Canadians. Evidence from studies of the [MINCOME](#) program in the 1970s and the [Ontario Basic Income Pilot](#) of 2017/18 demonstrate a dramatic reduction in poverty, lower doctor and hospital visits, and lower crime rates while improving recipients' mental and physical health, food security, educational opportunities, and housing adequacy while having a [negligible impact on labour participation](#). GLBI also has the potential to [mitigate the growing impacts of climate change](#) on low-income Canadians.

Paying for a basic income. Some have suggested that a GLBI is too costly to implement. [However, economists have shown how](#) a national basic income program could be paid for with negligible impacts on the taxes Canadians pay today. Advocacy groups ([BICN](#) and [UBI Works](#)) have demonstrated how a more equitable tax system could allay the costs of a basic income. The social return on investment resulting from reducing the [costs of poverty](#) and thereby improving health and well-being, would further offset the expense. Additionally, as has been shown with the [Canada Child Benefit](#), GLBI has the potential to boost local economies as the money would be spent locally.

In this moment, we must ask ourselves: what is the cost we face by continuing to address poverty with inadequate, piece-meal measures? If COVID-19 has taught us anything it is that **we need**

transformational change to meet a transformational moment. The current systems we have in place to address poverty and help Canadians in a time of crisis fail many of our citizens and residents, are deeply unfair, and woefully inadequate. Tinkering around the edges of these outdated mechanisms merely extends the harm Canadians face now and in times of crisis. With a rapidly changing labour market due to climate change, artificial intelligence, and automation, **we find ourselves in a moment where the systems of yesterday do not address the context and crises of today.** For more information please see our [FAQs](#).

Bill S-233 would require the Minister of Finance to establish a framework for a critical element of our future social safety net. With this work completed, legislators and stakeholders will be able to move forward in an earnest, evidence-based conversation on the future of a GLBI in Canada. Such a conversation is long overdue, and we owe it to Canadians and to future generations to ensure we adequately and thoroughly examine a measure with such potential and promise to create a just, transformational change. The cost and risk of not doing so is simply too high. **It is in this spirit that we urge the Committee to send Bill S-233 to third reading.**

Submitted on behalf of Coalition Canada Basic Income - revenu de base by

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