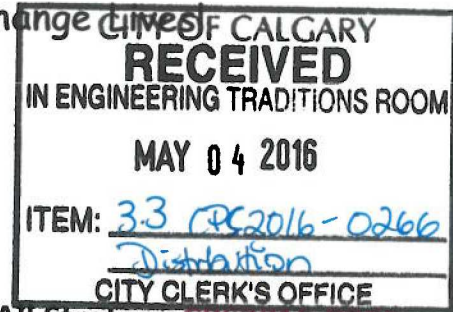


# Disability Action Hall

Tell Stories! Take Action! Change Lives!



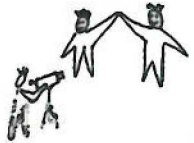
May 4<sup>th</sup>, 2016

Dear Members of City Council,

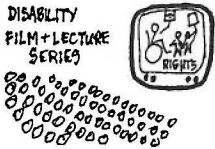
**RE: Letter of Support for the Enough for All Strategy** CPS2016-0266



Members of the Disability Action Hall are very pleased to share their support of The Enough 4 All Report. We are very proud of the City of Calgary's continued efforts to step forward as a leader in this community owned plan.



The Disability Action Hall is a coalition member of many groups working with the "Enough for All". We are excited about the exploration of the use of a sliding scale for Fair Entry and its approach to harm reduction to ensure the City's services are affordable to all. While we are not here today to specifically talk about the sliding scale, we would like to publicly recognize the City of Calgary for being a national leader in ensuring Calgarians can access the services they need.



No one level of government can end poverty by itself. A coordinated response is needed. The Enough for All strategy is a step in the right direction. Responding to a complex problem like poverty requires a very complex response from all different levels of Government. Changes to the City of Calgary policy will be a critical process in working towards an end to poverty. We applaud the Enough 4 All Strategy working towards the outcome "By 2023, 95% of all Calgarians are living above the poverty line."



Members of the Disability Action Hall continue to advocate to our province about the need to have social assistance programs indexed to the cost of living. One of the ways to achieve the 2023 goal is to encourage Alberta to take on a social assistance pilot project commonly referred to as the basic or guaranteed annual income.



We have attached our January provincial budget feedback letter to finance Minister Joe Ceci also asking for social assistance reform. Our finance minister Honourable Joe Ceci stated in his recent in the 2016 Budget address *"In the past when oil prices fell, the cost of that inaction was downloaded onto hard-working families through short-sighted cuts. Albertans paid in longer hospital wait times, overcrowded classrooms, longer commutes, higher fees, and lost opportunity. Some say we should repeat those mistakes. We say no. Our government won't turn the clock back on Albertans."* While we are thankful there have been no cuts to social services, as a province we are beginning to see a coordinated intergovernmental approach. After all, *"We are in this together."*

When community and all governments work together, Albertans will do better. We applaud Mayor Nenshi who has publicly said at the recent Mayor's Summit *"I think we are in a policy environment right now, perhaps brought on by the economic downturn, where people are willing to experiment a little bit more."* Alberta is ready to try basic guaranteed income. A pilot project will help enable all levels of government to understand how to coordinate poverty reduction efforts in a holistic manner based on the principles of adequacy, universality and individuality. We are ready for Calgary to take on this challenge and can only hope our Provincial Government will also take this lead.

Thank you again for your continued support for the Enough 4 All strategy. We are certain the City of Calgary will continue to be a leader in the national dialogue around a basic income for all.

Sincerely



**Colleen Huston**

**On behalf of the Members of the Disability Action Hall**

Cc:

Honorable MLA Joe Ceci, Minister of Finance

Honorable MLA Kathleen Ganley, Minister of Justice

Honorable Lori Sigurdson, Minister of Seniors and Housing

Honorable MLA Irfan Sabir, Minister of Human Services

Honorable MLA Brian Mason, Minister of Infrastructure & Transportation

Honorable D. Larivee, Minister of Municipal Affairs

Ms. Robyn Luff, MLA for Calgary East

**Friday, January 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2016**

Dear Honorable MLA Joe Ceci and Members of the Alberta Treasury,

**RE: Upcoming 2016 Spring Budget Priorities**

Members of the Disability Action Hall wish to commend the first steps to help balance the budget by the freezing of MLA and administration wages for the 2016 calendar year in order to properly fund social services during these challenging times. We are encouraged the child tax benefit has been expanded for more families in need by your recent announcement, Thursday, January 21<sup>st</sup> that social services will not be cut. We know that during this time many people are losing their jobs, some of us who are presently employed are very thankful we still have our jobs.

**Remember your roots**

As a province when we strive to be fiscally responsible, fair and equitable the challenge before treasury is a daunting one. We ask of you, as Minister of Treasury to remember your roots. Don't be afraid to spend money to help people who are struggling and don't listen to people who say you shouldn't be doing it. Investments in the future of our province and its people will help reduced costs in the long run, revenues will go up as people's health improves, have greater access to activities and more money to spend.

**Investing in Affordable Public Transportation**

We also remind the treasury to help us become more mobile and avoid the impact of isolation in our province by investing in the operation costs of public transportation across Alberta. Helping all of us move around in our province increases everyone's quality of life.

**Investing in the minds of Albertans**

We also know in order to increase Albertan's quality of life we need to be mindful of tuition fees, and they, too, need to be frozen as a symbolic gesture of investing in the minds of our future leaders.

**Structure of Social Assistance Programs and Health Benefits**

We are very concerned about the structure of social assistance and wonder if it is not enough for Albertans to live a good life in Alberta? One of us went to the dentist and was refused treatment to fix a cracked tooth and was only given antibiotics. The antibiotics may fix the current infection, but it will keep happening until the cracked tooth is fixed, which is never given the current rules. We would like to see an increase in preventative care such as improving dental care and improving our ability to get help from the doctor before we become sicker.

We also understand some Albertans may be falling through the cracks or are waiting too long to qualify for social assistance. We encourage you to not give into the

pressure of cutting services to people, whether we are new to the province or are born and raised here.

### **Affordable Housing**

It has been four years since AISH has been raised and we would like to know the funding priorities for Human Services and if at all possible, hear directly from Minister Irfan Sabir the direction we plan to go as a province. We cannot afford rental homes that are built to current code because the assistance rates are too far low below market. We also believe we need an intergovernmental approach to housing.

We are in a housing crisis and many people are in dire need of affordable, accessible housing.

If we can help our Cities, Province and Country work together to solve this problem, we would love to be of help.

We would appreciate hearing back from you if these are priorities are in alignment with the Alberta budget.

**Thank you for your time and consideration.**

**Sincerely,**

**Members of the Disability Action Hall**

cc: [Finance.Webmaster@gov.ab.ca](mailto:Finance.Webmaster@gov.ab.ca)

Right Honourable Premier Rachel Notley

Honourable MLA Mr. Brian Mason, Minister of Infrastructure and Transportation

Honourable MLA Mr. Irfan Sabir, Minister of Human Services

Honourable MLA Ms. Sarah Hoffman, Minister of Seniors, Housing and Health

MLA Ms. Robyn Luff, Calgary East

Office of the Mayor of Calgary, Mr. Naheed Nenshi