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The Right Honourable Justin Trudeau, P.C., M.P.
Prime Minister of Canada
Office of the Prime Minister
Ottawa, ON
K1A 0A3

November 29, 2024

Re: Reform of the Canada Disability Benefit to assist individuals with disabilities living in poverty

Dear Prime Minister Trudeau:

On November 27, 2024, Mississauga City Council passed a resolution to support Disability Without Poverty's call for stronger federal action to combat rising poverty rates among Canadians with disabilities. In line with this resolution, and on behalf of City Council, I urge the Federal Government to reform the Canada Disability Benefit (CDB) by increasing the amount paid and expanding the program's eligibility. This change is necessary to ensure that our most vulnerable residents receive the support they need to lead dignified and independent lives. No person with a disability should live in poverty.

Disability Without Poverty and Campaign 2000 have launched the *2024 Disability Report Card*, which assigns Canada a failing grade for its lack of progress in addressing poverty among people with disabilities. The report reveals that 1 in 6 Canadians with disabilities live in poverty, with rates more than double those of people without disabilities. In a survey, 97% of disabled people said an adequate CDB would transform their lives and lift them out of poverty, and 98% requested that the federal government include them in developing, implementing and monitoring the program. I've attached the full survey for your review.

As Canadians, we need to acknowledge the harsh realities and challenges faced by individuals with disabilities. Food Bank usage is at all time highs, rising monthly as people struggle to meet their basic needs. With the rising cost of living, the housing affordability crisis, and growing food insecurity, our communities are struggling. These challenges are felt even more by people with disabilities, who face systemic barriers in securing decent work, housing, income supports and access to public services. It is time to take decisive action to support those who are struggling and ensure that everyone has access to the resources, programs, services and funding they need to succeed.

The City of Mississauga recognizes these struggles, and we are doing everything we can, locally. But the impact of this issue is felt Canada-wide, making it a national priority that demands federal leadership and action. While the Canada Disability Benefit provides some

relief, it has fallen short of meeting the expectations and needs of its recipients. The benefit amount is inadequate, and the eligibility criteria is too narrow and restrictive. Many recipients have shared that the CDB is insufficient enough to cover rent, let alone other basic necessities. As a result, poverty rates for this group are twice as high as those without disabilities.

Reforming the Canada Disability Benefit is a starting point in building a more inclusive society, where Canadians of all abilities can live meaningful lives. Thank you for your consideration and your commitment to ending poverty in Canada.

Regards,



Carolyn Parrish
Mayor

- cc. The Hon. Pierre Poilievre, Leader of the Conservative Party of Canada and the Official Opposition
Jagmeet Singh, Leader of the New Democratic Party of Canada
Elizabeth May, Leader of the Green Party of Canada
Yves-Francois Blanchet, Leader of the Bloc Quebecois
Mississauga MPs
Mississauga City Council
Geoff Wright, City Manager and CAO, City of Mississauga

1. URGENCY:

The current situation is critical. Disabled people living in poverty are facing extreme hardship and life-threatening challenges.

2. DIGNITY:

97% of survey respondents feel the CDB could transform their lives if it is adequate enough to lift them out of poverty.

3. ADDED COSTS:

The Canada Disability Benefit Act states that additional costs associated with living with a disability must be taken into consideration regarding the amount of the benefit.

4. INCLUSIVE ELIGIBILITY:

96% of survey respondents agree that disabled people who already receive a federal, territorial or provincial benefit should get immediate access to the CDB.

5. SIMPLE APPLICATION:

Over 95% of survey respondents want an application process that is easy, seamless, fast and simple.

6. A FAIR BENEFIT:

95.5% of survey respondents feel the CDB needs to be responsive to the changing circumstances of applicants.

7. KEEP DISABLED PEOPLE INVOLVED:

98% of survey respondents agree that the government must include people with disabilities in developing, implementing and monitoring the CDB program.

Take Action!

The current CDB is not good enough.
People with disabilities deserve better. Much, much better.

Elected officials at all levels of government, we implore you to reach out to Prime Minister Trudeau, Finance Minister Freeland, Disability Minister Khera, and other members of the cabinet to make changes to this CDB now – it is not too late to turn around the misguided steps in the budget to make this into a truly historic benefit.

Name:

Location:

Contact:

Read the full report



disabilitywithoutpoverty.ca



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