

Injured Workers' Consultants

Representing injured workers free of charge since 1969

14 December 2016

Minister of Finance Charles Sousa

c/o Budget Secretariat
Frost Building North, 3rd Floor
95 Grosvenor Street
Toronto, ON M7A 1Z1
By email: submissions@ontario.ca

Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs

c/o Eric Rennie, Clerk of the Committee
99 Wellesley Street West, Room 1405
Toronto, ON M7A 1A2
By email: erennie@ola.org

Dear Minister Sousa and Standing Committee members,

Injured Workers' Consultants Community Legal Clinic is a non-profit legal clinic assisting workers free of charge since 1969.

I am writing to express Injured Workers' Consultants' support for the recommendations being made in the submission of the Income Security Advocacy Centre (ISAC) to the 2017-18 pre-budget consultations. We join in their support for the call from the Interfaith Social Assistance Reform Coalition (ISARC) to invest \$1 billion in social assistance this year.

The ISAC submission calls for a significant increase in this year's budget for investments in social assistance. The submission shows that the total incomes of people receiving Ontario Works and ODSP benefits are indefensibly low. And it shows that the system's punitive and counterproductive rules make life unjustifiably hard for recipients.

As a clinic who often works with those who are experiencing poverty, it is easy for us to comprehend the positive impact that an investment of this type would make.

As such, we support the call for a \$1 billion investment in social assistance, with a 10% increase in rates and changes to a number of the social assistance system's rules. These investments will improve the health and dignity of low-income people, reduce poverty and the costs of poverty, and give a much-needed consumer spending boost to the economy.

The government's Income Security Reform Working Group and the Basic Income pilot project have the potential to make longer-term change to the system, but we know that it is within government's power to make positive change now.

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You can read the ISAC submission at: <http://incomesecurity.org/publications/provincial-budgets/Ontario-Budget-2017-ISAC-pre-budget-submission.pdf>

We urge you to leave a positive legacy for low-income Ontarians by making these investments in Budget 2017.

Sincerely,
INJURED WORKERS CONSULTANTS

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "John McKinnon". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "J" and "M".

Per: John McKinnon
Executive Director

Cc: The Honourable Helena Jaczek, Minister of Community and Social Services; Peter Tabuns, MPP, Toronto-Danforth.