



# Knox United Church

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Honourable Jean-Yves Duclos  
Minister of Families, Children and Social Development  
House of Commons  
Ottawa, Ont. K1A 0A6  
[Jean-Yves.Duclos@parl.gc.ca](mailto:Jean-Yves.Duclos@parl.gc.ca)

Dear Minister,

We are writing to applaud your government's ambitious social policy agenda. Changes to child benefits, OAS/GIS, child care, parental leave, housing and services to Canadians with disabilities have been sadly neglected and are badly in need of attention. We are particularly pleased to see such changes come about through a reorganized ministry that dares to acknowledge that it serves families and especially children.

As people who believe in social justice, we especially welcome your intention to develop a Canadian Poverty Reduction Strategy. We know the human and social cost of poverty very well.

We would like to note how well you have based your government's top priorities on the excellent work done by the House of Commons standing committee in its 2010 report *Federal Poverty Reduction Plan: Working in Partnership Towards Reducing Poverty in Canada* and the 2009 Senate report, *In From the Margins, A Call to Action on Poverty, Housing and Homelessness*. These two singularly important documents reinforce one another and underline the priority we need to place on removing poverty from our country. This is a priority we deeply share with you.

We are hopeful that this signals your intent to re-establish the National Council of Welfare. As you know, the Council met its demise at the hands of the Harper Government but not before it authored *The Dollars and Sense of Solving Poverty* in 2011. The Centre was a national centre of excellence during its over thirty years of research and publication. It is not surprising then that the House of Commons committee called for its mandate to be expanded so that it could develop targets, measure progress and publicly report on the effect a Canadian Poverty Reduction Strategy is bound to have on increasing our national well-being.

The launching of a comprehensive national poverty reduction plan, effectively integrated with provincial plans, is a complex, expensive undertaking. We do well to keep one simple yet profound reality in mind. We are paying more for poverty now in terms of its social costs than the plans to reduce poverty will ever cost us. Poverty reduction respects the rights of children and families to live in dignity and invites them in from the margins to contribute to the mainstream of our society. We welcome them, preferring to see people assisted in attaining well-being within a supportive social framework rather than suffer the lack of one.

We wish you every success.

Outreach, Peace and Justice Committee supported by the members of Knox.