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### **Campaign calls on P.E.I. politicians to join Calgary and Edmonton mayors in backing basic income guarantee**

Following support for a basic income guarantee from the mayors of Calgary and Edmonton, the P.E.I. Campaign for a Basic Income Guarantee (C-BIG) is calling on the Province to commit to a P.E.I.-based basic income guarantee pilot project as part of the poverty reduction strategy promised in the recent Speech from the Throne.

Calgary's Mayor Naheed Nenshi and Edmonton's Mayor Don Iveson told reporters in June that they would support a basic income guarantee in principle.

"During the recent P.E.I. election campaign, we were thrilled that the leaders of all four political parties endorsed the basic income guarantee as a strategy to reduce and eliminate poverty," says Cooper Institute member Ann Wheatley, a C-BIG proponent. "With momentum building in the country for a basic income guarantee, P.E.I. could lead the charge by adopting this policy that would make a real difference in the lives of people with low incomes."

A basic income guarantee — also known as "guaranteed annual income" or "mincome" — is a system where all adults living below the poverty line would receive a benefit to bring them up to livable income amount.

"Undoubtedly, Mayors Nenshi and Iveson see the potential benefits that a basic income guarantee could bring to recipients – benefits that would quickly spread through an entire city or province," says Wheatley. "These would include financial benefits to local businesses and significant benefits to the overall health of citizens."

In 2011, it was estimated that 13% of P.E.I.'s population were living with low income. Two-thirds of Islanders with income from work – about 63% – make under \$30,000/year, and 39% of the population makes less than \$20,000/year. In the past two years, the Campaign for a Basic Income has worked with Islanders in a half-dozen public workshops in communities across the province to propose a model that would work well for Islanders.

In addition to Edmonton and Calgary, a basic income guarantee is also under consideration in countries such as Switzerland and Namibia, and has seen models established in places such as Netherlands, India, Brazil and Alaska.

“A basic income guarantee would ensure that every Prince Edward Islander would receive enough income to meet their basic needs,” says Wheatley. “It’s a straightforward policy that would make an immensely valuable investment in Islanders.”

For more information on the the P.E.I. Campaign for a Basic Income Guarantee, visit <http://cbigpei.wix.com/c-big-pei>.

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