



## GUARANTEED BASIC INCOME (GBI)

### The Debate\*\*

*The National Advocacy Circle is comprised of Vincentians from across Canada that are interested in Social Justice. Our intention is to identify advocacy issues for our fellow Vincentians and suggest actions we can take for the benefit of our neighbours in need. We are presenting a series of articles promoting the consideration of a Guaranteed Basic Income to address the needs of Canadians living in poverty. Please share this information with your conferences, councils and parishioners.*

### GBI is a universal program with astronomical costs that will increase taxes

- The basic income model advocated in Bill S-233 and C-223 is “income-tested,” which means only people living at or below the poverty line would receive a basic income.
- Bills before parliament and the senate recommend programs funded by both federal and provincial governments. Costs of existing social assistance and other programs funded both provincially and federally would be used for GBI.
- Maintaining poverty is costly. In addition to taking a significant toll on human lives, it exacts huge sums of dollars every year in health and social care expenditures.
- Research has shown that it is more costly to maintain a system of homelessness, and the institutionalized forms of care it requires, than it does to provide affordable and supportive housing options. The same is likely true of poverty – it takes more money to deal with its consequences than to actually eliminate it.
- Current poverty reduction federal programs do not require building a new administrative capacity to administer them, now or in the future.
- It may be time to re-consider government expenditures on corporate welfare, and the billions that get wasted each year on subsidizing (already wealthy) businesses. These subsidies have not been shown to generate jobs or improve economic performance.

### GBI acts as a labour disincentive

- Research of GBI programs around the world found they had “no substantial impact” on labour market participation. Notions that people are lazy and lack the motivation to work prevail, yet such myths are not substantiated by research. The suggestion that all people needing a GBI “should earn a living” rather than get assistance smacks of unfairness to people already working two to three jobs just to get by.

### Strengthen the existing social safety net instead of introducing GBI

- Evidence shows that the most effective and impactful elements of our social safety net are, in effect, like a GBI. These include the guaranteed income supplement for seniors, the Canada Child Benefit, and the Canada Workers Benefit.
- A GBI, according to the Parliamentary Budget Officer, would lift 49 percent of people currently living below the Market Basket Measurement of poverty to above it and into a life of dignity and greater health. Health literature shows, it is our social conditions, not individual behaviours, that largely shape our health and wellbeing.

- GBI studies have outcomes of lower hospitalizations and doctor visits. It has also been proven to have overwhelmingly positive impacts on mental and physical health, food security, children's health, and access to medication.
- GBI would allow artists and workers in the gig economy a life of dignity and protection.
- GBI can stimulate entrepreneurship, innovation, and economic growth.
- GBI can act as a crucial economic safety mechanism to help those fleeing intimate partner violence, allowing them to do so without risking falling into a life of poverty.
- GBI may address some existing programs' structural flaws and arguably limited impacts.

**\*\*Consider the following when learning more about GBI**

- Where and what credentials is the GBI research coming from and what is the "interest" of the researcher and/or person arguing for or against?
- Would we rather have tax breaks for wealthy Canadians or dignity and security for low-income Canadians?

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**References (*above points taken from*)**

News | Coalition Canada ([basicincomecoalition.ca](http://basicincomecoalition.ca))

Critics Of Basic Income Are Misrepresenting The Facts - Huddle.Today

*COMPILED by Kathy Haugh*

For further information see [https://www.obin.ca/case\\_for\\_bi\\_series](https://www.obin.ca/case_for_bi_series)

Take action <https://basicincomecanada.org/support/>

<https://www.ubiworks.ca/>