

## **Notes about Guaranteed Basic income in plenary advocacy presentation**

### **Slide 5 (of plenary session)**

Vincentians know that charity is important. We join the Society because we want to share our blessings with our neighbours in need. We provide material and spiritual support to our neighbours as best as we can.

As we do this, we learn about the needs of our vulnerable neighbours and about the systemic causes of poverty.

We learn that charity is not enough.

I feel sad when I go to visit a neighbour in need and my conference can give her \$60 once every three months. She receives \$733 per month, on social assistance and would need \$1600 every month more, to reach the poverty line. Social assistance rates in other provinces and territories are not very different from those in Ontario, so the problem exists across Canada. Charity can not provide enough for a life of health and dignity.

We currently have 2 programs that provide income security to some Canadians. Senior citizens, that is people 65 years of age and older, receive old age pensions and if necessary, the Guaranteed income supplement. For many years, this program was a source of satisfaction and even pride to Canadians because it lifted millions of seniors out of poverty. However, as we will see very soon, this program is no longer adequate as seniors are again falling into poverty because increases in their pensions have not kept up with the cost of living.

The other income security program that we have is the Canada Child Benefit which gives, low and moderate income families, a guaranteed child benefit for each child under the age of 18, every month. This robust program has lifted many children out of poverty.

We think that the time has come to provide dignity and security to all our vulnerable neighbours. Basic income targets people between the ages of 18 and 65.

## Slide 6

We propose a basic income and here is how it will work:

Recipients will start getting the benefit as soon as their eligibility for the Canada Child Benefit ends which is when they turn 18. Vincentians see how a family struggles with their budget when they lose that Canada Child Benefit of \$ 456 income from their monthly income. There is no adequate support in the social assistance model to provide for these young folks who are 18 years old, living in the family home, and probably still in school. Basic income would help to fill the gap.

Recipients of basic income will be identified in the income tax system. If a tax filer's income is below a certain level, they will receive a monthly cheque to bring them up to level identified as a liveable, basic income.

That monthly cheque will allow recipients to meet their basic needs, and they will not have report on how they spend it.

As well, recipients will be allowed to earn income to supplement their benefits. When their earned income reaches a certain level, their benefits will be reduced. People will be able to improve their quality of life with their earnings, and this will be a big incentive to find any kind of work. Another advantage is that they can develop employability skills that can benefit them in the future.

## Slide 7

People often ask, “How much will it cost?” A more important question is “What benefits will come from a Guaranteed Basic Income?”

Basic income is an upstream intervention, which means that the investments that are made now, will pay dividends in the future. As recipients gain better mental and physical health, medical costs will go down. Costs to the justice system will go down as petty crime decreases. Healthy people will be able to engage more in education and training which will lead to more people participating in the work force or other worthwhile activities.

For sure, it will take a few years to see the benefits but doing nothing will mean that nothing changes. In the end, a Basic Income costs less than keeping people in poverty

There are benefits that we will see immediately as well.

Recipients will have better mental health because they will be able to meet their basic needs and they don't have to worry about claw backs from earned income.

The stability that the basic income provides will promote a better home environment that will let children perform better in school.

Businesses in your neighbourhood will see an increase in business. People who have modest incomes, spend their money in their neighbourhood: grocery stores, pharmacies and hardware stores, not on international holidays or other big-ticket items. A basic income will be good for local businesses

## Slide 8

### Why now?

Basic income programs are effective. It's easy to find evidence that even very modest income support programs have provided worthwhile benefits. Just do an internet search on Basic income.

Fear of job loss. Many people, including well educated ones, fear that well-paid full-time employment may be a thing of the past. Automation and Artificial intelligence will impact every profession and industry. It has already begun. A Guaranteed Basic Income could become a necessity for many more people.

Leadership in support of Basic Income is building in government, faith communities and community organizations.

Leah Gazan an MP introduced a private member's bill (C223) in December 2021 asking the federal government to create a framework for a guaranteed Basic income.

In May 2025, Senator Kim Pate introduced bill S-206, also asking the government to create a framework for a Guaranteed Basic Income. This bill is now making its way to the House of Commons.

Both of these legislative initiatives attracted a lot of attention.

Many high profile and respected organizations are now advocating for a Guaranteed Basic income. The Canadian Public Health Association, Canadian Mental Health Association, the Anglican and United churches of Canada and Citizens for Public Justice have all stated their support for a basic income. And they have communicated their concerns to the federal government.

Vincentians need to get on board. We need to do the research, participate in learning opportunities and embrace the cause for a Guaranteed Basic Income.

We can attend social justice webinars on Basic Income

Seek out like-minded organizations. Internet searches provide a wealth of information

A good place to start is [SSVP.ca/advocacy](http://SSVP.ca/advocacy) because there is good information there.

Then we need encourage with our fellow Vincentians, our families and fellow Catholics to join us to help create a loud enough voice so that our elected representatives will take steps to implement a basic income. It is not only possible, but also necessary to ensure justice and dignity for our neighbours and a healthy and prosperous future for Canada.

Even though advocacy was low on the list of favoured activities for Vincentians, we need to work at it for the sake of our vulnerable neighbours.

And while we wait for Guaranteed Basic Income to become a reality, we continue our vital charity work