

# Community Dispatch

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## Canada Votes! – Child Poverty

canada  
VOTES!

“Just one question...”

This publication is intended to help you engage with local candidates in the federal election on October 14, 2008. It's all about social issues that impact your community; questions that matter to you; and the role that the federal government can choose to take in addressing them.

Questions raise issues. Questions require candidates to develop a clear position on where they stand. In this document, we cover thirteen social issues affecting communities nationwide today, provide sample questions you can ask your candidates, and include links to more information. By getting involved, you help shape the kind of community in which you live – all it takes is just **one question**.

### Child Poverty

Many families with children are living on incomes that fall well below the poverty line set by Statistics Canada. According to the most recent report card on child poverty in Canada, released by Campaign 2000 in November 2007, almost one child out of every six lives in poverty. Child poverty is unacceptable when we live in a country with so many resources. Tax cuts, like the recent GST reduction, mean we reduce our ability to

fund government programs that help children. We can choose to elect a government who will pool our resources and use them to lift children out of poverty.

Government programs like the GST credit, the Canada Child Tax Benefit, and Employment Insurance help reduce the rate of child and family poverty. Statistics Canada data from 2005 shows, with government transfer programs calculated in, the poverty rate is 16.8%. But if government transfers were taken away, the poverty rate would be as high as 26%. When we pool our money together through the tax system to allow for increased social spending, we can use these important government transfers to help those families that are in need.

The recent GST tax cut was estimated to reduce federal tax revenues by \$5.3 billion in 2007. The amount of money needed to bring all poor families with children up to the low-income line was approximately \$5.7 billion in 2003. By pooling our resources through the tax system into social programs, we could address problems that are the consequences of poverty, such as social exclusion, hunger, poor health, and homelessness. Canada as a whole can benefit when we alleviate the societal impacts of poverty. Government transfers to low-income families have an enormous impact on reducing the poverty rate. Ask your local candidate how they will fight and end child poverty in Canada.

For More Information:

First Call BC  
[www.firstcallbc.org](http://www.firstcallbc.org)

Campaign 2000  
[www.campaign2000.ca](http://www.campaign2000.ca)

Coalition for the Rights of Children  
[www.rightsofchildren.ca](http://www.rightsofchildren.ca)

SPARC BC  
[www.sparc.bc.ca](http://www.sparc.bc.ca)

#### Sources

Campaign 2000. 2007 November. *2007 report card on child and family poverty in Canada*. <http://www.campaign2000.ca/rc/> (12 Sept.2008)

## Child Poverty: Key Points & Questions

Despite continued economic growth, Canada's record on child poverty is worse now than it was in 1989, when the House of Commons unanimously resolved to "achieve the goal of eliminating poverty among Canadian children by the year 2000."

According to the most recent report card on child poverty in Canada, released by Campaign 2000 in November 2007, almost one child out of every six in Canada live in poverty.

Government transfers are key in helping families stay above the poverty line.

**What is your plan to ensure that child poverty in Canada is eradicated?**

**How will your party ensure that there is public funding to continue important services and programs that serve children and families?**

*Canada Votes Papers 2008 is a pan-Canadian collaboration between [SPARC BC](#), [Community Social Planning Council of Toronto](#), [Community Development Halton](#), [Human Development Council St. John](#), and [Canadian Council on Social Development](#). Social planning organizations across the country are helping to strengthen communities and work on social justice issues. We also recognize the need to work together around key issues affecting our communities. We have come together to provide this publication on the federal election because we believe that democracy works best when citizens engage in dialogue on important issues.*

*Canada Votes papers outline key social issues and related questions that are important in this election. Asking questions is a way to make sure these issues are on the public agenda. By reading this publication and passing it on, by asking questions and talking about the issues, and especially by voting on October 14, 2008, you can help shape the kind of community in which you want to live.*

#### Get Online!

You can download *Canada Votes* and find more interesting information online at [www.cdhalton.ca](http://www.cdhalton.ca)



Community Development Halton  
 860 Harrington Court  
 Burlington, Ontario L7N 3N4  
 (905) 632-1975, (905) 878-0955; Fax: (905) 632-0778;  
 E-mail: [office@cdhalton.ca](mailto:office@cdhalton.ca)  
 Web site: [www.cdhalton.ca](http://www.cdhalton.ca)  
[www.volunteerhalton.ca](http://www.volunteerhalton.ca)

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