

Letter-Writing Made Easy - a kit to support the concept of a Guaranteed Livable Income in Canada¹

This is a “how to” kit, to help you write *your own* letter to your MP, and cc. to the Prime Minister and Deputy PM, or copy to the leader of your MP’s party. We hope that every United Church member might contact their local MP **before March 12**. Letters that are personal and individual get more attention than those that are obvious cut-and-pastes, or “click here” petitions, so you are encouraged to use this kit and modify it to suit your style. This is a bit long, but we hope it makes the task easy for you. If you are a regular writer to your MP, just do it. This kit is just to get you started. But please do start!

--Lois Wilson and Ann McRae, revised for all parties, March 1, 2021.

WHY MARCH 12? WHAT’S THE HURRY?

The Liberal party meeting to decide priorities for this year will end on March 12. We need as many UCC members as possible in Liberal ridings to email a message to their MP before that date. In non-liberal ridings, the message is subtly different (see below), but we still need a groundswell of support to all parties, please!

STEP 1: FINDING YOUR MP’S CONTACT INFO

Start at this page <https://www.ourcommons.ca/Members/en/search>, locate your member using the postal code tools or alphabetically. Open their page and click on “contact”. His/her email will be shown there.

STEP 2: USING THE ‘cc’ LINE IN THE EMAIL HEADER:

Add the Prime Minister and Deputy PM email addresses to the CC line of your email, or the leader of your MP’s party (details for other party leaders are in **STEP 6**).

pm@pm.gc.ca

Chrystia.Freeland@parl.gc.ca

... And add your UCC regional contact person for guaranteed livable income – probably the person who sent you this kit.

STEP 3: OPENING AND SALUTATION:

In the body of your email, or in the Word document that you are going to attach, include the address as well. Letters carry more weight, so if you do not *attach* a letter, try to make your email look like a letter by laying it out with an address, a salutation, and a closing, like a letter.

¹ Guaranteed livable income (GLI) is used interchangeably with Basic minimum income (BMI), although some will argue for one and not the other.

You can use the constituency office address (as indicated at the website above), or the House address below. Remember to insert your member's title, "The Honourable", as shown:

The Honourable Phyllis Smith,
Member of Parliament
House of Commons
Ottawa, Ontario
Canada
K1A 0A6

Dear Sir, or Dear Madam or Dear Ms. Smith, rather than "Hi Phyllis".

STEP 4: THE BODY OF YOUR LETTER

OK, now the fun part. Be respectful, but say whatever you like. If you need inspiration, you might choose one or two short paragraphs from **Section A**, and a question from **Section B** to wrap up. We suggest only two paragraphs, so that someone actually reads it!

SECTION A: *Here are four points. Choose only one or two for your letter, or add your own short paragraph:*

I am delighted that a guaranteed livable income is at the top of issues that the government is supporting, because it reflects a progressive stance in public social policy. *(Only use this paragraph if your MP is a Liberal – check Parliament of Canada website if you aren't sure.)*

A guaranteed livable income removes the stigma of poverty and is available with a minimum of bureaucratic hurdles. Tax records already provide most of the data that the program would need, so it would be fairly easy to implement, in contrast to the network of overlapping existing programs.

Building on what we have learned from COVID-19, now is the time for an initiative to establish a guaranteed livable income. Poverty can happen quickly to anyone, and we need permanent measures, not just a crisis response.

The aborted pilot projects for guaranteed livable income under the Ontario Wynne government in Ontario illustrated that if people have money in their pockets, they will spend it. Many were motivated to secure better jobs, and thus benefitted the local community.

Ideally, members of all parties would see the benefits of guaranteed livable income, and would nudge the government to do the right thing. I hope I can count on your help with this. *(You could finish with this one if your MP is not a Liberal.)*

SECTION B: *Wrap up with a question or request or encouragement. Choose one or use your own idea:*

What can your government do to make this a reality? *(for Liberals)* ...or....

What can you and your party do to make this a reality?or....

I hope I will hear from you.or....

In closing, I thank you for all your hard work. I hope you will you give this idea serious consideration and support.

STEP 5: NOW YOU ARE READY FOR THE CLOSING:

Sincerely yours,

Ms. Letta Righter,
United Church member and your constituent,
123 Any Street,
Happyville, NS
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STEP 6: NOT QUITE DONE....

Please put the addresses of the PM and Deputy PM at the bottom of your email or letter. Here we encourage you to cut and paste, to get the protocols and titles right:

The Right Honourable Justin Trudeau

Prime Minister of Canada
Office of the Prime Minister
80 Wellington Street
Ottawa, ON K1A 0A2

The Honourable Chrystia Freeland,

Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance,
344 Bloor Street West
Suite 510
Toronto, Ontario
M5S 3A7

If your MP is not a Liberal, you might want to copy the appropriate party leader, instead of the PM and Deputy PM. Please check on the Parliamentary website, if unsure of your member's party affiliation. Names and contacts of leaders are below, for you to add the

email at the top of the covering email message, and the title and address at the bottom of your letter:

The Honourable Erin O’Toole

Leader of the Opposition
House of Commons,
Ottawa, Ontario,
Canada
K1A 0A6
Erin.OToole@parl.gc.ca

The Honourable Yves-François Blanchet,

Leader of the Bloc Quebecois,
House of Commons,
Ottawa, Ontario,
Canada
K1A 0A6
Yves-Francois.Blanchet@parl.gc.ca

The Honourable Jagmeet Singh,

Leader of the New Democratic Party,
House of Commons,
Ottawa, Ontario,
Canada
K1A 0A6
Jagmeet.Singh@parl.gc.ca

STEP 7: ATTACHING

If you composed your letter inside the email, you are ready to send. If you composed your letter as a Word attachment, you will need a covering email that just says “See attached letter in support of guaranteed livable income.’ Don’t forget to attach it before clicking “send” on the covering email. We’ve all done that, right?

Now you are done. Click “send.”