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JUL 17 2009

Ref: 150933

Julie Norton, Provincial Chair
First Call BC Child and Youth Advocacy Coalition
202 – 1193 Kingsway
Vancouver BC V5V 3C9

Dear Ms. Norton:

Thank you for your April 10, 2009, letter regarding minimum wage, income assistance rates, and wages for people employed by government-funded agencies. I am pleased to respond.

In regard to the minimum wage, we must carefully balance all of the costs and benefits associated with minimum wage policies and consider future changes in the context of the overall strategy to address poverty issues and promote a strong economy.

With respect to your recommendation that government provide a living wage for those employed by publicly funded agencies and programs, we are committed to fiscally responsible, sound management of taxpayer's dollars, particularly given the current economic climate and the need for fiscal restraint.

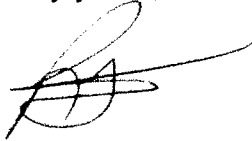
We have implemented an open and fair tendering process for government contracts that balances the priorities of British Columbians with available resources to ensure that taxpayers receive the best value and benefits for their money, employees have the best tools to do their jobs, and British Columbians receive timely and effective services.

The provincial government and the non-profit sector are working together to improve our operational and strategic relationship through the Government Non-Profit Initiative (GNPI). The GNPI is a joint effort between social and health ministries, government agencies, and the non-profit sector that aims to improve results in service delivery and social outcomes. The GNPI process has involved extensive community consultations to address systemic concerns, such as human resource capacity building, more efficient and effective ways to work together, and Aboriginal engagement. The GNPI anticipates further opportunities in the future, including involvement in work and advisory groups, consultations, pilots, surveys, workshops and conferences.

If you are interested in getting involved in the GNPI, or hearing more about it, you can register your name and contact information at GNPI@gov.bc.ca with a request to be added to their distribution list. Their web site can be accessed at: www.nonprofitinitiative.gov.bc.ca.

Thank you again for sharing your concerns and ideas, they will be
consideration in our regular review of provincial programs and ser

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Rich Coleman', with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Rich Coleman
Minister of Housing and Social Development

pc: Honourable Murray Coell
Minister of Labour

Mark Medgyesi, Executive Director
Government Non-Profit Initiative