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**NEWS EDITORS - FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**Vancouver Civic Parties Take up Call for a Living Wage for Families in Municipal Election**

First Call: BC Child and Youth Advocacy Coalition has been calling on candidates running for all Vancouver's civic parties in the November 15th election to commit to making the City, the School Board and the Parks Board living wage employers. We are pleased that some candidates are making this commitment.

According to our recently-released report, *Working for a Living Wage: Making Paid Work Meet Basic Family Needs in Vancouver and Victoria – 2008*, co-published with the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives and the Victoria Community Council, in Metro Vancouver the living wage is \$16.74 per hour, based on the needs of a family of four, with two children and both parents working full time. This is a wage that can lift low-income families out of poverty and crippling financial stress.

Our Living Wage Campaign is calling for this wage level, or an equivalent combination of wages and benefits, to be paid to all direct and indirect employees working for these public institutions.

"First Call is very encouraged to hear that COPE candidates have committed to examining how the City, the School Board and Parks Board can reach this goal if elected," said Julie Norton, First Call Provincial Chair. "We were also pleased to hear Vision mayoral candidate Gregor Robertson state publicly during the October 23, 2008 mayoral candidates' debate at that he would like to see Vancouver establish a living wage policy that would meet the \$16.50 per hour benchmark outlined in our report."

First Call is looking forward to hearing from candidates running for the NPA and other parties that they too will commit to making the City of Vancouver a living wage employer.

The Living Wage Campaign is urging all civic voters to consider the high rate of child poverty in Vancouver – 24% (2006 census data) – as an urgent issue and to seek commitments from all candidates for Council, School Board and Parks Board to put in place living wage policies if they are elected, so that all their employees will be able to afford to raise their families in a healthy fashion.

Visit [www.firstcallbc.org](http://www.firstcallbc.org) to download a copy of the report, *Working for a Living Wage: Making Paid Work Meet Basic Family Needs in Vancouver and Victoria – 2008*.

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