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July 27, 2009

The Honourable Gordon Campbell, Premier of British Columbia
Room 156, West Annex, Parliament Buildings
Victoria, BC V8V 1X4

Dear Premier Campbell,

As you prepare for your attendance at the August meeting of the Council of the Federation in Regina, we are writing to urge you to keep the issue of child and family poverty foremost on your list of priorities. As the attached letter from Campaign 2000 to all the premiers outlines, Canadians are looking for leadership from all levels of government on this issue. It is particularly urgent for BC, where the rate of child poverty has been the highest in comparison to all provinces for the six years up to 2007, when the economy was still doing well.

We hope that you and your fellow premiers will agree to deliver a strong, united message to the federal government about the need for federal leadership on poverty reduction and prevention through reforms to the Employment Insurance program to enhance both eligibility and benefits, an increase in the Canadian Child Tax Benefit, and other policy options to strengthen our social safety net for children and families.

As the Campaign 2000 letter notes, the cost of political inaction is steep. Our future depends on the ability of today's young people to achieve their fullest potential, and we know living in poverty undermines their health and development.

We appreciate the efforts you have already made to raise the need for EI reforms in this recessionary period and ask that you continue to advocate for robust poverty prevention and reduction measures from the federal government as a key part of Canada's economic recovery plan.

We would also be most interested in what lessons you think BC can learn from the experiences of the premiers who are implementing formal poverty reduction strategies in their provinces.

Sincerely,

Adrienne Montani
Provincial Coordinator
On behalf of 90 First Call partner organizations

Copies: The Right Hon. Stephen Harper, Prime Minister of Canada
Mr. Michael Ignatieff, Leader of the Liberal Party of Canada
Mr. Jack Layton, Leader of the New Democratic party of Canada
Mr. Gilles Duceppe, Leader of Bloc Quebecois
Attached: Campaign 2000 letter from Laurel Rothman