

Dear [name];

For six years in a row, British Columbia has had the highest child poverty rate in Canada. Figures released by First Call, the BC partner in Campaign 2000, show BC at a rate of 18.8 percent of children living in poverty in 2007. The Canadian average in that same year was 15 percent.

According to the *2009 Child Poverty Report Card*, in 2007 BC had a total of 156,000 poor children, equivalent to the entire population of Nanaimo and Prince George combined. And this was in a year of a strong economy.

I am very concerned that the province is not taking concrete action to address the high rate of poverty for children and families. Why is it that when six other provincial governments have committed themselves to poverty reduction plans, BC lags behind without any plan at all? This province needs a comprehensive strategy to reduce poverty with firm targets and timelines.

First Call recommends increases in the minimum wage and welfare rates, commitments to pay living wages, increased access to high quality child care and new housing programs for people with low incomes. You can read more recommendations from the report card at www.firstcallbc.org.

I ask you to take action on these recommendations, and to understand that the action we take to reduce poverty now will have an impact for years to come, reducing costs to government in other areas and increasing quality of life.

Sincerely,