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What We Don't Change, We Choose

Campaign 2000 is a national coalition that monitors progress and setbacks to end child and family poverty in Canada. It was initially formed to hold the federal government to its 1989 unanimous motion in the House of Commons to end child poverty by the year 2000.

Campaign 2000 Manitoba's most recent child and family poverty report card [Manitoba: Missed Opportunities](#) demonstrates once again that successive Manitoba governments have failed to meaningfully tackle child and family poverty. Manitoba remains the province with the highest rate of child poverty. More than 1 in 4 Manitoba children live in poverty. When speaking of children under the age of 6, it is 1 in 3. Manitoba used to be home to the federal ridings with the 1st, 3rd and 5th highest rates of child poverty but now we have the 1st, 3rd and 4th.

"The saying goes: What we don't change, we choose. We have continued to either ignore the problem or blame those who are trapped in the systems that are supposed to help them out of poverty but in reality end up keeping them mired in it. We are a rich country. Why do we allow this to continue?" **Sid Frankel, Campaign 2000 National Steering Committee**

"Each year, campaign 2000 releases a report on poverty in Manitoba and each year the impacts of poverty for First Nations continues to be far worse. There is a direct correlation between what perpetuates inequality amongst First Nations and systemic, institutional, and colonial practises. First Nations are disproportionately over-represented in Child and Family Services, Justice, Health, and homelessness. In an era of reconciliation, we need a committed government to begin putting tangible action into the recommendations that Campaign 2000 identifies. As First Nations, we are willing to collaborate with the government to address these contributing factors of poverty and to finally eliminate poverty for First Nations in Manitoba." **Cora Morgan, First Nations Child and Family Advocate Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs**

"Fearless R2W serves families involved in child welfare in one of the poorest ridings in Canada, Winnipeg North. We are calling for increased access to quality public services, the ending of selling Manitoba Housing stock, free internet and exemption from CERB/CRB recovery to alleviate child and family poverty, and reduce the over apprehension of children." **Mary Burton, Fearless R2W**

"We called the report Missed Opportunities because of the most recent missed opportunity of our provincial government to capitalize on a federal initiative, the 2016 Canada Child Tax Benefit. The government released their poverty strategy in 2017 but did not resource it and even

changed the legislation so they would no longer be required to report back on it. The result? Child poverty rose in 2017, 2018 and 2019 which is the most recent data available. And again, we are still talking about pre-pandemic conditions. How do we think these families weathered the pandemic storm? Too many children in Manitoba are missing out on opportunity” **Kate Kehler, Social Planning Council of Winnipeg, C2000 MB**

“The recent Throne Speech promised to develop innovative approaches to meet the needs of single parents and Indigenous youth. Given that 62% of children living in single parent families live in poverty and Indigenous people living on reserve and off reserve make up 65% and 53% respectively of people living in poverty in this province, and 90% of the kids in Child and Family Services are Indigenous and we know these kids then end up being over-represented in houselessness and jail, any and all investment is long, long overdue. We need a real commitment to providing the necessary supports to keep families together while helping parents fulfill their dreams of better education and/or meaningful employment.” **Desiree McIvor, Make Poverty History Manitoba**

“As nurses, we see firsthand the results of children and families living in poverty, which includes poor health outcomes. The *Manitoba: Missed Opportunities* report is aptly named, as we are indeed missing the opportunity to make a meaningful impact on the lives of so many Manitobans, especially our children. We call for action on the part of the Manitoba government, there is simply no more time to waste.” **Darlene Jackson, President of the Manitoba Nurses Union**

“Teachers know that child poverty has a profound effect on students’ ability to learn—and on their opportunities for educational success. As a society, we need to find the moral compassion and financial commitment to help these children more quickly. Lifting kids and families out of devastating poverty is not a burden, but a privilege.” **James Bedford, The Manitoba Teachers’ Society**

“One in 7 Manitoba households were food insecure prior to the pandemic, meaning they did not have the financial resources to buy enough food (PROOF [Food Insecurity Policy Research](#)) and resulting in significant impacts to their physical and mental health. **One in 5 Manitoba children lives in a food insecure household.** Rising food prices and lost wages during the pandemic have only made the situation worse. Household food insecurity is not an issue of food, but one of equity, including our collective obligation to provide a high quality of life to everyone in Manitoba. A properly resourced provincial strategy with clear timelines for ending child poverty is key to fulfilling this obligation.” **Rob Moquin, Food Matters Manitoba**

“If there is anything that needs Manitobans to pull together, it should be to eliminate or reduce poverty among sections of communities and specially among children with newcomer children included. Government leaders have to commit to allocate funding differently to empower families and communities that are often left out in decision making processes. For newcomer children investment in after school programs and culturally sensitive holistic health programs are a few of the practical ways to reduce poverty.” **Reuben Garang, Immigration Partnership Winnipeg**

“Poverty grinds people down. It makes for an endless set of days that are stressful for parents from the time they wake to the time they go to bed. Newcomer families living in poverty worry about how they are going to pay their bills and also pay for their children’s school supplies. They worry about not having enough money to pay back the transportation loans they were charged by our government, a poverty-entrenching policy that few other governments require. If we alleviated poverty through financial empowerment, a living wage, affordable social housing, and low-cost universal child care, that ideal passage from newcomer to citizen would be so much smoother, and we could achieve the ideal of an inclusive multicultural society that we hold dear.” **Shereen Denetto, Immigrant and Refugee Community Organization of Manitoba.**

“The report also makes note that Manitoba’s income disparity is growing which makes the province an outlier when compared to others. In Manitoba, those earning less than \$25,000 annually saw their income go down while those earning \$50,000 to \$80,000 saw their after-tax income rise. These are policy choice from this government that must be amended so that those who need the most get more.” **Josh Brandon, Social Planning Council of Winnipeg**

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