

From: **tim rourke** racoon@bell.net  
Subject: T.O. livingrant GLI news breeze Toronto October 23, 2016  
Date: October 25, 2016 at 3:32 PM  
To: livingrant group toronto@livingrant.ch



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## GLI news breeze Toronto October 23, 2016

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Sorry I am a bit late getting this out. I have been whacking busy the last few days. This is going out to 61 subscribers.  
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### BITO October 18

It was not a well attended function. There were an unusual number of cancellations. Four people showed up. One wanted to leave right away for fear of being trapped in the throngs when the Jays game let out.

Another person wandered in later and said there were a lot of sad looking people outside so the Jays must have lost. But it seems they did not that night.

There were not enough people to decide anything, so we talked generally, reviewing our progress, sharing some bits of information.

Matt mentioned there was going to be a conference of Ontario BI activists in Peterborough on November 19, but has provided no further information about it. This is very interesting.

There is a motion at the city council to support the "pilot". It is sponsored by councillor Mihevc and is going through the governance committee. It is packaged as part of the support for the "food basket" and is likely to pass. However, it is puzzling why it has to be based by stealth. It has not been discussed yet; may be discussed in early November.

Matt explained that we are not the Austrian version of BI. To clarify this, we should call our proposal BI+, the progressives, to distinguish it from the Austrian BI-.

It is suggested that BITO should meet every two weeks in order to keep people plugged into the group. A month is too long; people's interest fades. Also, when things get going we will need two meetings a month to take care of business and give time for general discussion.

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### C2C October 19

It has been a week of meetings about BI and poverty in General. I attended an important meeting of the "commitment to Community" group on October 19. This is an outgrowth of the Social Planning Council of Toronto.

The meeting was to discuss strategy in dealing with the next budget cycle but ended without coming up with any new ideas.

This group has a bit of a morale problem now, because it has spend a couple of years getting the council to adopt a "poverty reduction strategy" and then been kicked in the teeth when city council did not fund it. The Tory regime wants to cut everything in the city except the police budget, and to go after transit riders especially hard.

Sean Meagher, the new chair of Social Planning Council, piped up that SPC stopped a similar austerity attack about five years ago. This did not really cheer many people up.

Of course, infiltrators were there. Some jerk started talking about how TTC drivers being paid too much was somehow preventing "refugees" from getting jobs. It was noted in response that \$30 an hour works out to \$60 000 a year pretax, which is not much to raise a family on in Toronto.

So, we all stopped a "blitz" in 20112, but stealth austerity has been continuing. You can't win a war if you are always on the defensive. The leadership of SPC always seems to be on the defensive, with no real insight or strategy.

An analysis is needed of what exactly is driving austerity in the city. Most people, even among the wealthy, would not mind a raise in property taxes. Where does the austerity push come from? No answer.

The take away from this for BI/CI activists is that local politicians love to make symbolic gestures, like endorsing a "BI

The take away from this for BI/GLI activists is that local politicians love to make symbolic gestures, like endorsing a BI pilot” as long as they do not have to put up any money.

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### **Health and Strength Action Group October 20**

Paul talked about the Unify Toronto group, which is about unifying Toronto spiritually. That is, getting all religions cooperating. It became quite an esoteric discussion.

We asked why as a society do we allow poverty to continue. This got to; what do people in power see as the advantage to having other people in poverty. We all wrote out answers to that.

Among other things, because some people see the economy, and life generally, as a zero sum game. Somebody has to lose so I can win.

Other points; creating poverty insures a supply of cheap and compliant labor. Or, it helps keep everybody scared and submissive.

After these heavy discussions, we turned to figuring out how to work the button machine. The instructions which came with it were not very good, but eventually we figured the process out and produced a few buttons. The next things we realized was that we needed a decent design of button.

We also have a limited amount of supplies. I did not find out where to obtain more the inputs and for how much. But we will figure this out and start producing buttons for sale to fund some of our activities.

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### **Mowat Centre event October 20**

Another function regarding BI/GLI happened October 20 at a swanky restaurant in The Annex. It was put on by the Mowat Center. The panel was our old friend Michael Mendelson, plus Andrew Coyne the Toronto Star writer and Trish Hennessy from Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives.

The trouble here is that all three panelists are basically opposed to a Basic Income. Nobody much challenged them from the audience, so it was an insipid discussion. Mostly, they rehashed the arguments against BI; mostly the cost argument. What they all seem to want is improvement to the existing system.

Among the truisms trotted out were; a policy that makes people worse off makes no sense. A work disincentive is not “giving people money to not work” but taking money from them when they do work.

Mendelson asked what the consequences were of all these experiments during the seventies. That actually is not a bad question. They went nowhere then, how will another pilot fare any better now? However, the response should be to get the full monty happening.

Coyne did make some argument in the direction of a GLI. He quoted Hugh MacKenzie as saying Ontario is out \$19 Billion a year due to tax cuts. And children and senior citizens already have a GLI.

So I threw out a question; rather a statement inviting response. I said that the most dishonest argument against GLI is that it is unaffordable. The money lost from responsible tax cuts in the past twenty years amounts to over 6% of GDP, more than enough to cover a decent GLI.

Mendelson’s response was that he did not say GLI was unaffordable, just that we “won’t afford it.” Pft! The trouble with being a “question from the audience” is you get one shot at the mike, you can’t follow up these sorts of twits and pin them down.

Coyne was even worse. He said 6% would be “another personal income tax” meaning, as much again as is collected in income tax. Or the total cost of health care. Of course, the GLI would not be coming out of personal income tax. The increased revenue would come from corporate taxes, wealth taxes, where all the dead money is now piling up.

It was too bad I had run out of leaflets to spread around. But the problem is still, what we need are some real debates featuring serious advocates of a BI/GLI.

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## The Federal Poverty Reduction Strategy

This is an important development. As I have said constantly, only the federal government has the ability to actually eliminate poverty through a GLI. The movement needs to focus there and not be needlessly distracted by the provincial government. distracted

<http://www.nationalnewswatch.com/2016/10/17/is-canada-on-the-cusp-of-change-for-4-9-million-people-living-in-poverty/#.WAWgVNwfS4B>

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Now we have the Vimeo of the October 14 webinar on;

### Basic Income; what is it and what could it mean for social assistance?

[http://yourlegalrights.on.ca/webinar/basic-income-what-it-and-what-could-it-mean-social-assistance?utm\\_source=ISAC+Media+%26+Policy+News&utm\\_campaign=2c8e006acd-Media+and+Policy+News+emails&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_term=0\\_342c280cba-2c8e006acd-140445945](http://yourlegalrights.on.ca/webinar/basic-income-what-it-and-what-could-it-mean-social-assistance?utm_source=ISAC+Media+%26+Policy+News&utm_campaign=2c8e006acd-Media+and+Policy+News+emails&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_342c280cba-2c8e006acd-140445945)

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**The Kingston BIG group** has started a letter writing campaign to the Federal Minister. Here is their message explaining the project, and the template below.

Hi Everyone,

Our group in Kingston has just to try to kickstart a letter writing campaign to Jean-Yves Duclos. In August we wrote him and received a response from his office assuring us that the Federal government is exploring "a variety of options—such as basic income guarantee—for reducing poverty and strengthening the middle class." We want to capitalize on that.

We've just launched what we hope will become a nationwide letter writing campaign from ordinary citizens to urge M. Duclos to get on with the work of exploring/testing/implementing BIG. We've sent letters to all our supporters (about 200 people mostly but not all in Kingston), asking them to write and send along the request to their networks with the further request to send it along etc. We provided the attached "template" as an example that could be used as is or adapted as suitable, urging individuals to write personally and to take the project where possible to church groups, school groups, community groups, whatever, hoping that letters will pour in from across the country, providing Duclos some evidence of the political feasibility of the BIG project. We ask people to spread the word quickly because if possible we'd like to have letters sent by the beginning of December. Hopefully, the short time span will help with the 'pouring' in aim of the project. We've recommended short letters - if possible no longer than a single page - to be copied to the local MP as well.

It seems to us that the points made are not the essence, numbers are. And of course this could work or not. But even some letters will be useful, and of course larger numbers even more so. So we're asking our colleagues in advocacy groups throughout the country to consider joining the effort - as individuals. (A letter from a BIG advocacy group - should you choose to do that - would likely be quite different from the attached template, of course.) The main hope from our point of view is for individuals, advocates and not, to write personal letters and engage their personal networks to follow suit, fanning the whole effort out. Please share this at least with the members of your advocacy network.

Thanks,

Toni  
for the Kingston BIG group

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### The Template

Date

Address

The Honourable Jean-Yves Duclos,  
Minister of Families, Children and Social Development,  
House of Commons,  
Ottawa, Ontario.

Dear M. Duclos:

I write to applaud your Ministry's overarching goal to increase economic and social security for all Canadians, especially those among us who are most vulnerable. I am persuaded by the evidence that the most effective policy for realizing this goal will be a basic income guarantee. I am writing to urge you to do all you can to make this happen.

In tandem with a broad social support system, including affordable housing, child care, dental care, pharmacare, and programs that assist those with particular needs and vulnerabilities, a progressive basic income would make a crucial difference in the lives of those living in poverty. These include the increasing numbers of those without secure jobs, students graduating with huge debt, those seeking a life in the creative arts, as well as those living with a physical and/or mental disability who often fall through the cracks of current social welfare and disability programs.

You have declared that the recent, and most welcome, Canada Child Benefit provides 'a piece' of a basic income guarantee. With this initiative and with the increase to Guaranteed Income Supplement for single seniors, the poorest group may now be single men, many of whom live in appalling circumstances.

But they are not alone. Canada's important decision to admit thousands of new refugee claimants underlines the inadequacy of social assistance, as many of those newcomers flock with thousands of Canadians to overstretched food banks and soup kitchens. These were never intended to provide permanent support. That they are now frequented by children and their parents, many of whom have two or three badly paid and insecure jobs, points to the real need for a basic income guarantee.

I am pleased that your government has offered to support the governments of Ontario and Quebec with their proposed pilots for a guaranteed annual income. I trust that this will be the beginning of a federal-provincial collaboration that will see a basic income guarantee in place across the country. It is surely not an exaggeration to call this the most important policy initiative since the introduction of medicare in the 1960s.

I shall follow your progress on the development of a basic income guarantee with great interest and would welcome your response on how ordinary Canadians like me could further this project.

Yours sincerely,

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**New book on Basic Income by "Leaders and Legacies" publisher**

*"Basic Income: How a Canadian Movement Could Change the World."*

<http://leadersandlegacies.com/2016/10/24/new-book-on-basic-income-by-leaders-and-legacies-publisher/>

( This sounds really interesting. As soon as I get \$17 back in my Paypal, I will have to get a copy. Write a review of it. tr)

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Next GLI news breeze due October 30. Really!

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