

# Guaranteed Living Income Toronto Newsbreeze

November 5, 2018.

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The "Put Food in the Budget" <https://www.putfoodinthebudget.ca/> coalition had this to say about Ford and NIT.

The 3 year basic income pilot program, which started last year, is now being canceled and "wound down."

We have been critical of the Basic Income pilot project, but canceling the pilot a year after it was underway demonstrates a reckless disregard for the lives of 2000 people on the pilot who planned their lives on the assurance of having a set income for 3 years, and who must now scramble.



**Put Food in the Budget**

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# **A commentary on the present state of progress toward achieving a Guaranteed Living Income in Canada.**

I have a little time and energy from other tasks, and so it is time to put out another Guaranteed Living Income Newsbreeze. There are a few topics to write about now.

As I have said, I will continue to put these out about twice a year. However, my focus for the next year or so will be on some other things which should gain me some greater personal security and more resources to apply to activism.

Right now a Basic Income has become a sort of dead issue in Ontario, and to an extent across Canada. It is a good time for people interested in the basic concept to step back and rethink the issue, and their approach to it.

Obviously, the kind of BI being presented, and the way it is being presented, is not ringing many bells among the sections of the Canadian polity who need to be convinced. BI/GLI advocates need to listen, and really listen, to what serious anti poverty activists are saying about the kind of BI schemes being put forward.

We are not going to get this kind of reexamination from the nimbuses of Basic Income Canada Network. That organization has been totally coopted by the Negative Income Tax faction. It has a totally undemocratic structure with no room for dissent. It will never attract serious support for its core NIT ideas. It is a real 'go nowhere' organization.

This creates a problem for developing a vehicle with which to revive the Demogrant idea of a BI. The ultimate mother ship, Basic Income Earth Network, has a policy of recognizing only one BI group in a country. It is

obviously not a good idea for it to get mixed up in local fights over who “owns” the BI franchise there.

I see evidence that a new network of groups committed to a Demogrant model is developing in Canada. It seems to be happening mostly on the west coast. There are some indications that this is developing in Quebec as well, but they are only talking with each other in French.

I am not sure of this, of course, and I have not had time to really investigate. A medium term goal of mine, if I can get the money, is to take an extended trip out west to see just who these people are and what they are contemplating.

The culture is different there than it is in Ontario. Westerners will be more supportive of the real personal independence of a demogrant. They will be less interested in a NIT scheme that keeps people locked into a dependent relationship with a bureaucracy. I am from the west.

To check out the western view of a GLI, there is still the Livable 4 All <http://www.livableincome.org/> website out of Victoria, run mainly by an old acquaintance, Cynthia L’Hirondelle. She has been at it a long time and may be getting a bit tired. Check what she has to say about the term “Basic Income”.

More recently, the Livable Income Vancouver group has emerged. <https://www.livableincomevancouver.com/blog/principles-of-a-guaranteed-livable-income> I send you to their “principles of a GLI page” first because they are really getting that right.

Returning to the international level, interesting things are happening with Basic Income Earth Network. They recently held a congress in Finland. The next one will be in India.

The web site for the recent congress is found at <https://basicincome.org/news/2018/09/finland-international-bien-conference-2018-part-1/> As usual, they are very slow at coming out with executive minutes and video of the more interesting presentations.

As I noted last year, the election of Louise Haagh and the move from Belgium to the UK has also come with a marked opening of discussion on the BIEN web site. There is now some caution regarding obsession with pilot projects, with seeing a BI as a panacea, and with attaching the concept to various dubious ideas.

There is a recognition that the BI idea needs to stay linked to social development. Also, it seems as if these people have also been sobered by being shown over the last year that all these beautiful schemes they want to study and point to can be swept away like sawdust when a reactionary government comes into office.

We have seen some of that in Ontario, haven't we? I was a bit impatient with people who were totally surprised when the Ford government arrived, then in a total panic when they started doing what reactionary conservatives, like them, do.

A probable conservative victory could be seen coming for years. What was a bit sudden was the coup against soft conservative Patrick Brown a few months before the election. The convention which chose Ford was obviously rigged.

I wonder if all this will finally get people in Ontario, and especially Toronto, to step up to the need for serious reform of our totally inadequate governing institutions. This leads me to two other topics I have long been interested in. One is Proportional Representation. The other is provincial status for my home city of Toronto.

In the past I have worked with Fair Vote Canada. The way they have developed is a good lesson for a Basic Income movement in Canada. That is a future topic for this newsletter.

It is interesting that it looks like B.C. will be the first province to break through the suffocating Canadian passivity and create electoral reform. If you don't want to keep on having Doug Ford type reactionaries getting dictatorial power with 41% of the vote, this is what you are going to have to do.

We are definitely not getting any kind of BI until we have

governments which can be compelled to do what the public wants. That is going to require proportional elections. Thus, a BI advocate might want to forget about BI organizing for awhile and go work for Fair Vote Canada and local affiliates. <https://www.fairvote.ca/>

Another thing that is absolutely necessary, but isn't happening anytime soon because it depends on Timid Torontonians themselves, is "succession from Ontario". Jennifer Keesmaat started out talking about it but quickly got chickened out on it. It is not even a particularly radical idea; in most developed countries major cities are provinces in their own right.

To conclude, I think the next couple of years will be a good time for Income Guarantee advocates to take a break from it; lay low, rethink and recalibrate. To repeat, you need to think about why the way the concept of an income guarantee was presented created so much hostility in people who would theoretically benefit from it.

I think the Basic Income 'brand' is dead. We need to start talking about a Living Income or a 'livable for all' income. We need a new organization. We need to get ourselves clear about what we are and are not talking about.

The recent interest in Basic Income is abating. People are getting caught up in the new storm and strife which is developing, between the radical right and the radical centre. A Left barely exists right now in Canada; that is part of the problem.

In Ontario for a few years this will take the form of the conflict between the 'Doug the Thug' government and the flakes who oppose him but who have nothing to offer. Remember that the right wing only comes into office when the left and the centre have totally failed, and people turn to it in desperation.

For the next few years people will be very uninterested in hearing about 'pilots' and about Negative Income schemes which only turn the poor against the very poor, and do not really benefit anyone. In Ontario it will be better to talk about a doubling of social assistance payments immediately.

A Demogrant can begin to be discussed when some

stability has returned. By that time I expect the Basic Income brand and the ideas it has become associated with to have been forgotten about by all but a small core of proponents.

Well before then I hope to be ready with the kind of blogging/social media platforms I want, and to have nothing to do anymore except to use them.



## **HOTLINKS!**

### **On the Ford fiasco**

Statement on the announced changes to Ontario social assistance | Canada Without Poverty

<http://www.cwp-csp.ca/2018/08/statement-on-the-changes-to-ontario-social-assistance/#.W2ICWoLBR6l.twitter>

Doug Ford's New Poor Laws Replace Basic Income

<https://socialistproject.ca/2018/08/doug-fords-new-poor-laws-replace-basic-income/>

The perversion of poverty in Ontario

<http://bit.ly/2xGO1yd>

## **On the stupidity of pilots**

More evidence of the calamity for GLI advocacy that “pilots” and “negative income tax” have become <https://ceosforbasicincome.ca/>

BC government announces study of basic income for all residents

[http://dailyhive.com/vancouver/bc-government-basic-income-residents-research-2018?utm\\_source=ISAC+Media+%26+Policy+News&utm\\_campaign=1b5b3fae2b-Media+and+Policy+News+emails&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_term=0\\_342c280cba-1b5b3fae2b-161199393#.W0kR0vFF\\_Q0.twitter](http://dailyhive.com/vancouver/bc-government-basic-income-residents-research-2018?utm_source=ISAC+Media+%26+Policy+News&utm_campaign=1b5b3fae2b-Media+and+Policy+News+emails&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_342c280cba-1b5b3fae2b-161199393#.W0kR0vFF_Q0.twitter)

Class-action lawsuit launched against Ontario government over cancellation of basic income pilot <https://www.thestar.com/news/queenspark/2018/08/27/class-action-lawsuit-launched-against-ontario-government-over-cancellation-of-basic-income-pilot.html>

Here is a computer simulation of a BI showing it would leave people worse off. Of course, a NIT would.

<http://www.flanderstoday.eu/basic-income-doesnt-work-antwerp-research-suggests>

## **On building a GLI movement**

"It's wrong for anyone to come between anyone else and the resources they need to survive." <pic.twitter.com/dk0seUYcTg>

Non-Causes of Poverty, Jobs, Welfare Responses

<https://pmarcuse.wordpress.com/2018/09/24/blog-122c-non-causes-of-poverty-jobs-welfare-responses/>

The Vancouver gli web site <https://www.livableincomevancouver.com/blog/principles-of-a-guaranteed-livable-income>

**Next newsbreeze will probably be out next spring around March. By that time we will have info from the latest BIEN congress. It looks like some interesting things happened there.**

**We will also know how badly Ford is going to attack poor people in Ontario and what kind of resistance will be forthcoming.**