



Winnipeg Supports a National Housing Strategy

On Thursday, November 22 at 10:00 A.M. in front of the Cargill Building, 240 Graham Ave., corner of Garry and Graham in Winnipeg housing advocates will stand together with other cities across Canada in support of Bill C-400, an Act to ensure secure, adequate, accessible and affordable housing for Canadians. The picketing will be in front of the Cargill Building as it houses offices of the Federal Government. We have asked for a meeting with the Conservative caucus in Winnipeg but have received no response.

A press conference will be held at 10:15

Background

Through the 1970s and early 1980s, Canada had a national housing strategy that was envied around the world. The Federal Government created 20,000 social housing units each year until cutbacks began in 1984. In 1993, all federal spending on the construction of new social housing was terminated and by 1996 the federal government had transferred responsibility for most existing federal social housing to the provinces. Fourteen years later, Canada is the only G-8 country without a national housing strategy.

Who is affected by Canada's Housing Crisis?

Millions of Canadians are impacted:

The number of people without a home in Canada is estimated to be between 150,000 and 300,000. In Winnipeg the number of people experiencing homelessness is hard to pin down, but we know that on any given night in Winnipeg there are about 350 individuals staying in emergency shelters and an estimated 1,400 who are a part of the 'hidden homeless,' meaning staying on friends' or relatives' couches or in other housing where they have no legal protection or right to stay.

- 1.5 million Canadian households are in "core housing need". This means that they are spending more 30% of their income on rent, or are living in inadequate or overcrowded homes, putting them at significant risk of losing their housing, their health and their spirit. One third of Winnipeggers and Manitobans renters live in core housing need.
- 3.3 million Canadian households live in housing that is considered substandard.
- Canada's housing supply deficit - the gap between the number of new households and the amount of new housing - is growing at 220,000 households annually.

The housing crisis impacts the most vulnerable

- Nearly one-in-seven users of emergency shelters across Canada are children
- Aboriginal Canadians continue to be vastly overrepresented in homeless counts across the country.
- Nearly one quarter of all new Canadians are paying more than half their family income in rent.

The Cost of Homelessness in Canada

The most immediate costs of Canada's housing crisis are the loss of human life and potential. Every 12 days a homeless person dies in British Columbia. Links between poor housing and increases in morbidity and premature mortality have been clearly established. There are also substantial economic costs associated with failing to address homelessness.

It costs on average \$48,000 a year to leave someone on the street versus \$28,000 a year to house them. Long-term social housing is one of the most cost-efficient ways to house someone.

Average cost to house someone for one night:

- Psychiatric hospital - \$380
- Provincial correctional facility - \$155-\$250
- Emergency homeless shelter with meals - \$60-\$85
- Enhanced self-contained apartment with support on site - \$67-\$88
- Self-contained apartment - no support - \$25-\$35
- Self-contained apartment – mini-suite/bachelor - \$14-\$20

A decade of federal inaction on homelessness has cost Canadian taxpayers an estimated **\$49.5 billion dollars** across all services and jurisdictions.

It is time for a National Housing Strategy

Years of federal government inaction have resulted in a housing crisis that the United Nations has described as a “national emergency.” For fourteen years, investment in housing has been piecemeal, inconsistent and inadequate. A comprehensive, funded national housing strategy will deliver results that are better for individuals, better for communities, better for the economy, and better for government.

Without a funded national housing strategy, lower levels of government will not have the resources required to address the growing need for safe, affordable housing in their communities. As well, efforts to meet the needs of the one-in-four Canadian households who are precariously housed will remain fragmented and uncoordinated.

Today we urge all Members of Parliament to vote in support of Bill C-400 when it comes for a vote before the House of Commons on November 28. We further urge the Federal government to take Bill C-400 seriously, to listen to the voice of the people and to create a sustainable national housing strategy now.

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