



November 2, 2021

The Honourable Karina Gould
Minister of Families, Children and Social Development
House of Commons
Ottawa, Ontario
K1A 0A6

Dear Minister Gould,

On behalf of the Canadian Association of Social Workers (CASW), I would like to extend our sincere congratulations on your re-election and appointment as Minister of Families, Children and Social Development for the Government of Canada. We know from your background as an advocate in your community – and in breaking down barriers as the first member of Cabinet to give birth while in office – that you deeply appreciate the many challenges that individuals and communities still face: challenges exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic.

As background for you, since 1926, CASW has been the national association voice for the social work in Canada with the dual mission of strengthening the profession and advancing issues of social justice. In relation to our mandate, CASW has strongly welcomed your government's actions toward a fairer and more equitable Canada.

For decades, CASW has advocated for a coordinated national poverty reduction strategy and was delighted to see the creation of the Canadian Poverty Reduction Strategy, as well as increases to the Canada Child Benefit and the Guaranteed Income Supplement. CASW also welcomed the historic legislation that enabled the National Housing Strategy that will progressively realize housing in Canada as a human right.

In terms of the next great step forward in poverty reduction in Canada, CASW strongly advocates the federal exploration of a [universal basic income guarantee](#) (uBig) through a series of location-based pilots in one urban, one rural, and one northern community with provincial and municipal partners.

By providing an up-front, comprehensive investment in people, uBig is policy that would best support, children's rights, women's rights, newcomers rights, and the other numerous communities disproportionately experiencing poverty throughout Canada. CASW supports a universal basic income as it also has the potential to provide vast long-term cost savings in the areas of health care, social services, corrections, and more.

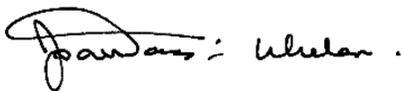
As well, the CASW is advocating for the adoption of a [Social Care Act for Canada](#) to support equity across the country, strengthen federal leadership, and develop mechanisms for benchmarking of outcomes. This Act would also serve as information sharing between provinces, thus enabling the development of innovative approaches to end poverty. CASW proposes the adoption of a Social Care Act for Canada with principles similar to those of the Canada Health Act to help guide the Canada Social Transfer (CST) and other social investments, making possible a national strategy with shared performance indicators.

Such an *Act* would help guide the provinces and territories in developing policies that best fit their unique needs, while helping the federal government better understand where dollars are being spent – and, in turn, where more targeted investment might be needed.

In terms of ongoing work from the previous mandate, we certainly look forward to the swift and responsible implementation of an affordable, accessible childcare plan for all Canadians and congratulate the work done so far. Finally, specific to the profession of social work, CASW looks forward to supporting you government on the campaign promise to include social workers in the existing Canada Student Loan forgiveness program. This is a win-win policy decision which will serve social workers as well as communities throughout Canada.

Again, on behalf of the CASW federation and its over 20,000 members, I extend our sincere congratulations on your appointment as Minister of Children, Families and Social Development. If you would like to learn more about our organization and the work we do to advance social justice in Canada, visit our website at casw-acts.ca. We look forward to the forthcoming mandate letters, and to supporting your work and the Government of Canada more broadly.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Joan Davis-Whelan". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "J" and a long horizontal flourish.

Joan Davis-Whelan, MSW, RSW
President, CASW