Morning Media Scan: Labour Reform - June 6, 2017

From:	"Stinson, Jeffrey (CAB)" <jeffrey.stinson@ontario.ca>
To:	"@OPO-Media Relations and Issues Management" <opo-mediarelationsandissuesmgmt@msgov.gov.on.ca>, "Rowe, Mary (OPO)" <mary.rowe@ontario.ca>, "Bevan, Andrew (OPO)" <andrew.bevan@ontario.ca>, "McEachern, Gillian (OPO)" <gillian.mceachern@ontario.ca>, "Killorn, Bill (OPO)" <bill.killorn@ontario.ca>, "Coe, Michael (OPO)" <michael.coe@ontario.ca>, "Foerster, Carly (OPO)" <carly.foerster@ontario.ca>, "Tomney, Genevieve (OPO)" <genevieve.tomney@ontario.ca>, "Jancik, Mike (OPO)" <mike.jancik5@ontario.ca>
Cc:	"@CAB-Trans CO" <cab-transco@msgov.gov.on.ca>, "Sumi, Craig (CAB)" <craig.sumi@ontario.ca>, "Di Giovanni, Robert (CAB)" <robert.digiovanni@ontario.ca>, Electronic Media <cab.emedia@ontario.ca>, "Stinson, Jeffrey (CAB)" <jeffrey.stinson@ontario.ca>, "Law, Sally (CAB)" <sally.law@ontario.ca>, "Ma, Cesue (CAB)" <cesue.ma@ontario.ca>
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Morning Media Scan: June 6, 2017

MEDIA SCAN LABOUR REFORM

June 6, 2017

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Print Coverage

The Globe and Mail: High minimum wages have minimum benefit ;; B4; 2017.06.06

ID: GAM.20170606.rbcomahboubi **PUBLICATION:** The Globe and Mail **EDITION:** Ontario **DATE:** 2017.06.06 **SECTION:** Report on Business **PAGE:** B4**BYLINE:** By PARISA MAHBOUBI **WORD COUNT:** 599 **DATELINE:**

High minimum wages have minimum benefit ;

Ontario and Alberta will soon dramatically increase their minimum wages to $15 an hour.
Unfortunately, these fast and sizable minimum-wage increases are likely going to reduce employment and increase poverty, particularly for the lowincome families that the governments are seeking to help.
The Ontario government introduced legislation on June 1 to raise its minimum wage from $11.40 an hour to $14 next year and then to $15 on Jan. 1, 2019.
As soon as Jan. 1, 2018, Ontario will face – under the legislation – the largest one-year increase in the minimum wage rate (22.8 per cent) of any province over the past two decades.
In June, 2015, Alberta was the first province to plan a $15 minimum wage, which would amount to a 47-per-cent increase from the then-current $10.20 over four years. Although this is Canada's largest four-year increase in a minimum wage in the past 20 years, the changes there are more gradual than under Ontario's plan.
Ontario Premier Kathleen Wynne said the changes will improve the standard of living for low-income families. But the government should be concerned that a significant increase in the minimum wage will likely reduce employment.
Ontario has the largest share of employees earning the minimum wage among Canadian provinces. As a result, the impact of hiking minimum wages to $15-an-hour levels will be more severe in Ontario than in Alberta.
Lower-wage industries are at the highest risk. A reduction in net job creation in sectors such as restaurants and services seems to be unavoidable.
More workers in low-income occupations, coupled with faster growth in the minimum wage, increases the cost of labour and reduces the profitability of companies. As a result, employers will be forced to increase their prices, reduce their production or close altogether. This leads to higher unemployment among more vulnerable employees.
Employees earning minimum wage are more likely to have a contract or part-time job. They are also more likely to be less skilled and young with no experience. As such, they are the kind of employees that companies can most easily do without.
This reduction in employment ends up putting more vulnerable families in poverty. A study of past Canadian increases in the minimum wage found that teen employment dropped considerably. These teens were important earners for lowincome families. The result was more families falling below lowincome cut offs.
These results show that Alberta and Ontario need to rethink how they increase their minimum wages.
What should they do?
Ontario and Alberta need to move to a higher minimum wage more gradually. Companies need time to adjust. This is particularly important for smallsized enterprises.
The ability of business owners to manage the minimum wage varies by region, as does the cost of living. The impact of minimum wage on workers and businesses in Toronto or Calgary is different from those in rural areas, where firms are often smaller and living costs are lower. The provinces should consider a lower minimum wage outside of cities.
There also needs to be flexibility to delay minimum-wage increases in case of a recession.
This is what California has allowed for as it phases in a higher minimum wage. Neither Alberta nor Ontario have such flexibility in place.
In short, a higher minimum wage requires a flexible and well-designed plan to increase the minimum wage to minimize the impact on the economy and workers. Otherwise, the unintended consequences of a higher minimum wage will end up hurting exactly those that governments are trying to help.
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24 Hours Toronto: Examining Toronto's employment future; A10; 2017.06.06

PUBLICATION:	24 Hours Toronto
PAGE:	A10
DATE:	2017.06.06
SECTION:	News
EDITION:	Final
BYLINE:	Antonella Artuso
SOURCE:	24 Hours Toronto
KEYWORDS:	future,toronto,workers,themselves,three,uniforms
WORD COUNT:	255

Examining Toronto's employment future

Future Toronto workers will likely find themselves in one of three "uniforms" - a white collar, an ironic T-shirt or a polyester pantsuit.
Joshua Wright, with the labour market analytics firm Emsi, said Canada's highest concentration of financial and investment analysts positions is found in Toronto.
"The data clearly shows Toronto has an impressive financial sector and a growing IT sector," Wright said by e-mail. "Two of the top three occupations for projected total job growth - from 2017-2022 - are computer/IT professions. Financial and investment analysts and auditors/accountants aren't far behind."
Emsi is projecting employment growth in Toronto over the next five years in positions related to finance, banking and insurance, he said.
The highest-paid growing occupations are urban and land use planners and government managers in health and social policy development.
"Perhaps most interesting on this list, based on the sheer size of the occupations, are software engineers and computer and information systems managers," Wright said. "Both are projected to add several thousand workers over the next five years - easily the most on the list (with) pay over $46 per hour in median earnings."
Overall, the highest number of positions in Toronto can be found as a retail salesperson, food counter attendant or kitchen helper - jobs where the median hourly wage in 2016 was $11.31 to $12.12.
These people's future wages will be impacted by the Kathleen Wynne government's recent announcement that the minimum wage is growing to $14 an hour in 2018 and $15 an hour in 2019.
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Ottawa Citizen: Kathleen Wynne is all about the F word; A2; 2017.06.06

PUBLICATION:	Ottawa Citizen
PAGE:	A2
DATE:	2017.06.06
SECTION:	City
EDITION:	Early
BYLINE:	Alison Jones
SOURCE:	The Canadian Press
KEYWORDS:	general,election,looking,three,major,provincial
ILLUSTRATION:	/ Kathleen Wynne;
IMAGES:	/ Kathleen Wynne [OTCT_20170606_Early_A2_03_I001.jpg];
DATELINE:	TORONTO
WORD COUNT:	865

Kathleen Wynne is all about the F word

One year out from Ontario's next general election, we're looking at the three major provincial parties, their leaders, and their potential paths to victory. Today, in Part 1, we look at Kathleen Wynne's Liberals.
Listen to Ontario's premier speak these days and chances are she'll talk about fairness. It has become her mantra, an idea she ties to nearly every big announcement she has made lately, from a $15 minimum wage to a basic income pilot, to housing market cooling measures and rent control.
Expect that to continue through to next year's election on June 7, 2018.
"Everything we've done will be part of the re-election (bid), but I certainly hope there will be a discussion in the election campaign about how to have a fairer society," Wynne, 64, said in an interview.
Wynne said she is "being very intentional about fairness," whether it's by raising the minimum wage, giving low-and middle-income students free post-secondary tuition, a youth pharmacare plan, or cutting electricity bills.
Hydro is where the renewed focus on fairness and affordability seems to have started. With voter anger over rising hydro bills reaching a fever pitch, Wynne first admitted at a Liberal convention in November that she made a "mistake" by paying too much attention to the larger problems in the electricity system

and not enough to how costs were accumulating on people's bills.
She has always fought for "social justice," Wynne said, but what's changed is how she communicates her plan.
Wynne used the word fair and variations of it about a dozen times while unveiling a basic income pilot project in April and about two dozen times while talking about a $15 minimum wage last month. She has unveiled the Fair Hydro Plan, the Fair Housing Plan and the Fair Workplaces and Better Jobs plan.
"Making sure that we do everything that we can to make people's lives fairer, make the province a fairer place to live, yeah, that has been a focus," Wynne said in the interview.
Greg Sorbara, who was finance minister under Wynne's predecessor Dalton McGuinty, called that platform a game changer.
Sorbara made headlines earlier this year for saying on TVO's The Agenda it was "extremely unlikely" the Liberals could win the next election with Wynne at the helm. Her approval ratings have been dismal of late.
"The night I was on The Agenda the prospects looked very dim indeed," he said in an interview. "I think there's more light at the end of the tunnel ... There's a sense that the premier herself and the government is really getting its act together and that bodes well in the last year of a mandate."
There is a renewed focus on vulnerable populations, which is often a political strategy of the left, Sorbara said.
"Is (Wynne) occupying all of the space of Andrea Horwath's (NDP) party?" he said. "I think she's occupying a lot of it and I'm not sure that's a bad political strategy."
Wynne swears she is still "leading from the activist centre," her phrase of 2014, but many others have noted her shift to the left. A recent newspaper editorial called her a great NDP premier.
The next election will be the most difficult the Liberals have faced in a long time, Sorbara said.
Anger over hydro bills has not gone away, and opposition politicians will be sure to remind voters that the Liberal plan to cut bills in the short-term means ratepayers will end up paying more in the long-term.
Wynne's decision to partially sell Hydro One to raise infrastructure cash remains unpopular.
In September, not one, but two, trials begin involving Liberals: one in Sudbury on Election Act bribery charges and another in Toronto on mischief and breach of trust charges over the alleged deletion of emails about gas plant cancellations.
And by that time, the Liberals will have been in power for 15 years. One of their biggest challenges will be fighting an appetite for change, said Geneviève Tellier, a political-science professor at the University of Ottawa.
"It's to send a message that it's not the old Liberals that are in power, but they have new ideas and they're a dynamic and efficient and responsible government and they deserve to be re-elected," she said.
That messaging was on display on the weekend as 600 Liberals did a mass canvass in 54 ridings, knocking on 60,000 doors to promote their plan.
Polls have suggested they have a long way to go, but Wynne's laser focus on pocketbook issues could still pay off.
One of the latest polls put the Liberals ahead of the Progressive Conservatives, though within the margin of error, and Wynne's own dismal approval rating saw a slight uptick, though it's still below 20 per cent.
The Campaign Research poll is an outlier right now, but chief executive Eli Yufest said announcements such as youth pharmacare, basic income and a balanced budget have helped the Liberals pull ahead in his polling for the first time in a long time.
"The provincial Liberals will not give up without a fight," he said. "There's no doubt that what they're doing, what they're unveiling in terms of policy is resonating among the electorate."

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The Hamilton Spectator: Law changes will hurt young Ontario workers most; Employers will hire fewer workers under new laws; A10; 2017.06.06

PUBLICATION: The Hamilton Spectator
PAGE: A10
DATE: 2017.06.06
SECTION: Editorial
EDITION: First

BYLINE: Charles Lammam, Hugh MacIntyre and Ben Eisen
KEYWORDS: wynne,government,recently,proposed,series,changes
WORD COUNT: 529

Law changes will hurt young Ontario workers most; Employers will hire fewer workers under new laws

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The Wynne government recently proposed a series of changes to Ontario labour laws including a significant hike of the minimum wage to $15 per hour.

The government's stated goal is to help vulnerable workers. But unfortunately, the proposed changes will, on balance, hurt the very workers they are meant to help.

Let's start with the most headline-grabbing change - the proposal to rapidly increase the minimum wage from its current rate of $11.40 to $15 by 2019. This is a 32 per cent minimum wage hike in less than two years, on top of several other hikes in recent years. In 2019, when the new increases are fully implemented, Ontario's minimum wage will have increased 110 per cent since 2004, much more than what would have been required to keep pace with inflation.

But here's the problem. Despite good intentions, the Canadian evidence consistently shows that minimum wage hikes result in fewer job opportunities for inexperienced and low-skilled workers.

Just as consumers tend to buy less of a product if its price increases, employers will hire fewer workers and/or reduce labour costs if government regulations make it more expensive to employ workers without corresponding improvements to workplace productivity. It's the least skilled workers - often those ages 15 to 24 - who lose out on employment opportunities because they tend to be the least productive due to their dearth of experience and skills.

In fact, Canadian research consistently finds that for every 10 per cent increase in the minimum wage, youth unemployment increases by three to six per cent. Even the Wynne government's own Minimum Wage Advisory Panel acknowledged this. Considering that the Ontario government plans an increase of 32 per cent, the negative effects on youth employment will be stark.

And because Ontario will implement the marked increase in a very short period (less than two years), the negative effects will be magnified as employers - including many small businesses - will have little time to plan and adjust accordingly.

The Wynne government plans to increase labour costs in other ways including mandated higher benefits for employees (more paid vacation, paid emergency leave) with likely similar negative effects - fewer job opportunities for low-skilled Ontario workers.

Indeed, research published by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) covering 97 countries from 1985 to 2008 finds that increasing the cost of hiring - including mandated increases to leave and paid vacation - contributes to higher unemployment. The same study finds that more stringent and restrictive labour market regulations in general lead to higher unemployment, particularly among youth.

Crucially, the Wynne government plans to mandate higher labour costs at a time when Ontario businesses already face high electricity prices, in part due to provincial government policies. In fact, the proposed labour law changes are just the latest in a series of government policies that make the province a less-attractive place to do business.

The Wynne government has explicitly said it wants to help vulnerable workers in Ontario. Yet its proposed labour policies will hurt, not help, many workers in the province - especially Ontario's youth.

Charles Lammam, Hugh MacIntyre and Ben Eisen are analysts with the Fraser Institute (www.fraserinstitute.org)

Waterloo Region Record: Law changes will hurt young workers the most; A7; 2017.06.06

PUBLICATION: Waterloo Region Record
PAGE: A7
DATE: 2017.06.06
SECTION: EDITORIAL
EDITION: First

BYLINE:	Charles Lammam, Hugh MacIntyre and Ben Eisen
KEYWORDS:	wynne,government,recently,proposed,series,changes
WORD COUNT:	530

Law changes will hurt young workers the most

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The Chronicle Journal: [Wynne's election mantra is fairness HL:Ontario's Liberal premier sets focus on fairness one year aw]; 2017.06.06

PUBLICATION:	The Chronicle Journal
DATE:	2017.06.06
SECTION:	Quebec- Ontario general news
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WORD COUNT: 868

[Wynne's election mantra is fairness HL:Ontario's Liberal premier sets focus on fairness one year aw]

Wynne's election mantra is fairness
HL:Ontario's Liberal premier sets focus on fairness one year away from the election
By Allison Jones
THE CANADIAN PRESS
TORONTO - Kathleen Wynne is all about the F word.
Listen to Ontario's premier speak these days and chances are she'll talk about fairness. It has become her mantra, an idea she ties to nearly every big announcement she has made lately, from a $15 minimum wage to a basic income pilot to housing market cooling measures and rent control.
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The Timmins Daily Press: Liberals trying to distract public from main issues; A4; 2017.06.06

PUBLICATION:	The Timmins Daily Press
PAGE:	A4
DATE:	2017.06.06
SECTION:	Opinion
EDITION:	Final
BYLINE:	Trevor Holliday,
SOURCE:	The Timmins Daily Press
KEYWORDS:	northern,ontario,party,calling,liberals,political
DATELINE:	Northern Ontario Party leader
WORD COUNT:	609

Liberals trying to distract public from main issues

The Northern Ontario Party is calling out the Liberals on their political antics they are using to buy votes and to get the voters to focus their attention away from the negativity toward their leader, Kathleen Wynne. The Liberals want the voters to focus on anything other than the Liberals'incompetence that has caused an unstable economy and undue economic hardships for the citizens of Northern Ontario.
The current government wants the Ontario voters off the hydro, healthcare and cost of living issues that they have created. Instead, the Liberals are using the minimum wage increase debate as a diversionary means to steer us away from the negativity that Kathleen has been receiving as of late.
Yes, the increase is inevitable, but not such a large increase with little or no time for Ontario businesses to adjust or prepare. The minimum wage increase should be done in such a way that no one is in jeopardy of losing their job or their business in the process.
The NOP feels such an immediate jump in the minimum wage will not only cause businesses to close, but the businesses that stay open will be forced to increase their prices to make up the huge added expense. This will just cause inflation to jump and in no time everyone is right back where they have started, with no one being better off than they were before. Our party feels to avoid this, the formula needs to be corrected and the minimum wage increase spread over an extended period of time.
The Liberals'circus acts on hydro, taxes and wasteful spending has created Ontario's fragile economy. Do you really trust them with correctly handling the minimum wage issue? The other big establishment parties all play the same games with no care or commitment to Northern Ontario and its success. They all think and guess that what works in Toronto, works everywhere.
Unfortunately, we believe the minimum wage increase will be felt more in the North than any other part of the province and did us Northerners even get a say? This is what we know needs to happen, to ensure businesses and our fragile economy will grow and becomes stronger, not implode. Cost of living needs to get back to a realistic level. This would include near cost of hydro without delivery or taxation. Bring housing back to an affordable level that would allow as many people as possible to buy and have access to appropriate homes. Everything we have in our platform needs to be done, including slowing the rate of the minimum wage increase to a rate of approximately 75 cents every six months until we reach the $15 an hour level.
We know that most people want the increase now, but after all that has been done to destroy the economy and businesses in Northern Ontario, we need to ensure it will be done right the first time. To create the maximum benefit for everyone, we need to make sure that the minimum wage rate is above the rate of cost of living to avoid and eliminate poverty.
So before you jump on the big three parties'bandwagon, be sure to really weigh all pros and cons. The big three parties have all shown that they will only highlight the positives in an attempt to win the voters'favour

before an election. With an election just around the corner, do you believe Kathleen is doing what is best for you and your family or is she doing what's best to win an election? The Northern Ontario Party when voted in, will better Northern Ontario for everyone, every day.
Trevor Holliday
Northern Ontario Party leader

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Cornwall Standard Freeholder: Minimum wage meeting; A1 / Front; 2017.06.06

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PAGE:	A1 / Front
DATE:	2017.06.06
SECTION:	News
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BYLINE:	Alan S. Hale
SOURCE:	Standard-Freeholder
KEYWORDS:	cornwall,business,community,meeting,behind,closed
WORD COUNT:	362

Minimum wage meeting

The Cornwall business community will be meeting behind closed doors later this month to discuss the proposed minimumwage hike.
The impending legislation would cause the Ontario minimum wage jump almost three dollars to $14 per hour next January, and again to $15 a year later.
The Cornwall and Area Chamber of Commerce is calling a town hallstyle meeting on June 21 to discuss the issue and its impact on the business community after an outpouring of apprehension and uncertainty from their members the day the wage increase and several other labour law changes were announced.
The chamber's executive manager, Lezlie Strasser, said the meeting will be closed to the public to allow business owners to speak their minds freely on a polarizing issue.
Topics of discussion will also include the other labour and employment reforms included in the legislation that would require all workers - contract, temporary and part-time - to receive the same hourly wage as a fulltime, permanent employee. The bill also includes changes to vacation time/pay.
The chamber has claimed, without identifying the businesses, that two of its members are facing increased costs of $65,000 and $1 million per year because of the new regulations.
The meeting is just one part of a larger effort by business organizations across the province to react to the unexpected announcement of a $15 minimum wage, even though activists have been pushing for one in Canada and the United States for many years now.
The Cornwall chamber is joined the Ontario Chamber of Commerce in calling on the Ontario government "to undertake an evidencebased economic impact analysis to determine the effects of the proposed legislation on those who operate businesses and work in the province."
The government has been issuing almost daily statements on the package of changes, highlighting its case for the benefits of a higher minimum wage and the other reforms introduced in the bill.
Other organizations that run programs to assist the working poor, such as Social Development Council of Cornwall, Akwesasne and SDG and the Agape Centre say the wage increase is an important and necessary step to providing people with a "living wage." ahale@postmedia.com twitter.com/alan_S_hale

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North Bay Nugget: Basic income plan doable: Study; $15 billion money well spent; A2; 2017.06.06

PUBLICATION:	North Bay Nugget
PAGE:	A2
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KEYWORDS:	extra,billion,introduce,basic,income,guarantee
WORD COUNT:	993

Basic income plan doable: Study; $15 billion money well spent

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It would cost an extra $15 billion a year to introduce a well-designed basic income guarantee in Canada, a new Northern Policy Institute report suggests.

It's money that would be well spent, prof. Evelyn Forget said in her report Do We Still Need a Basic Income Guarantee in Canada?, published by the Northern Ontario think tank.

"The key is to find the right way to integrate the BIG (basic income guarantee) into all of the existing social programs that exist in the country," Forget said in a release. "Now is the time to address, headon, the challenges and tradeoffs that are necessary to create a universal BIG that can meet the needs of Canadians in the 21st century.

"The challenges are real but so, too, are the costs of doing nothing."

Forget said calculating the costs of a basic income guarantee program can be tricky, especially if --as critics argue --people are less inclined to work. However, she said, the evidence suggests basic income guarantee programs do little to change people's approach to work.

"If a BIG reduces the incentive to work and, consequently, many more people rely on the program than anticipated, the costs will be much higher than calculated," she said. "If, as is more likely, there is little behavioural response for most people, then costs will be much more modest. The behavioural response is something we do not yet know without the results of the proposed experiment."

At the same time, Forget concedes a basic income guarantee program won't solve every social problem, but it can help ease the burden for Canadians struggling with poverty.

"We conclude that BIG, like any other social program, can address a variety of issues but cannot independently solve all social problems. If well designed, a BIG can not only deliver a range of benefits, but can do so at a feasible cost."

In Do We Still Need a Basic Income Guarantee in Canada?" Forget cites shifts in the economy leading to income insecurity and outdated social policies as reasons why basic income is a much needed policy in Canada for people finding themselves falling between the gaps.

In calculating the costs of basic income guarantee, Forget uses payouts based on the plan the Ontario government will experiment with in three cities, including Thunder Bay. Eligible individuals will receive up to $16,989 per year, less 50 per cent of any income they earn. Couples will receive up to $24,027 per year, less half of any income earned. Ontario residents with disabilities will receive up to an additional $6,000 per year.

As a result, a basic income guarantee program using Ontario's numbers, and "targeted to those between 18 and 64, will cost Canadians approximately $30 billion a year, less the $15 billion we currently pay for income assistance. A net cost of $15 billion annually is not only feasible, it is about five per cent of federal government expenditure and much less than we currently spend on seniors' benefits.

"We can afford it if we choose to afford it."

For her report, Forget, a University of Manitoba professor, examines Mincome. In the 1970s, Canada tested basic income guarantee in a field experiment in Manitoba called Mincome.

Almost 40 years later, Ontario is preparing for a three-year basic income guarantee pilot based on the model proposed in Hugh Segal's recent discussion paper for the Ontario government. It is through both of these lenses that Forget explores both key design principles for consideration, and estimated costs associated with such a policy at the federal level.

According to her report, key considerations should include: -Basic income guarantee, or BIG, should be targeted and support should be gradually withdrawn as income increases.

-BIG should be targeted to adults (18-64 years of age).

-BIG should make no one who depends on existing income support programs worse off.
-Costs of a BIG should be allocated to those with the greatest capacity to bear the burden -BIG should not be seen as a replacement for all other social programs.
Forget said while experiments with other basic guarantee income programs have been dropped without becoming policy, the changing workplace should compel governments to take a fresh look at the idea.
"Since the 2008 financial crisis, it has become increasingly impossible to ignore the growing numbers of workers who spend many years or their entire careers working on insecure, short-term contracts. Young people just entering the workforce struggle to find secure employment that makes use of their training and offers them anything like the salary, security and range of benefits previous generations took for granted.
"Older workers, displaced by technology, often lack the skills to compete for the jobs that exist. The workplace has never been welcoming to people with invisible disabilities, and support programs offered by the state are under pressure, as struggling workplaces faced with global competition offer even less room for the supports required by these workers. People who leave the workplace because of their own poor health, or to support family members, often do not qualify for any support until a lifetime worth of savings, intended to finance a reasonable retirement, is exhausted.
"BIG offers ways to address some of these policy gaps, but we need to understand the choices involved in turning the idea of basic income guarantee into a specific policy that can be applied in the real world, and integrated with a range of existing and not entirely consistent taxation and social policies. Turning an idea into a policy requires careful choices and some compromise."
The paper is the second of a series that explores the various topics presented at NPI's Basic Income Guarantee conference held in Sudbury last October. Report topics include food security issues, potential models for a BIG pilot, tax implications, and the potential impact on social innovators and First Nations communities.
To view reports, presentations from the NPI's BIG conference and explore comments and feedback from participants, visit www.northernpolicy.ca/big.

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