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Time for Justice: Have your say on Ontario's 2020 Budget

Ontario's Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs is conducting **Pre-Budget Consultations**.

ISAC appeared at the Standing Committee's hearings and provided a [written submission](#). Informed by ongoing consultation with our community partners on issues relevant to our mandate, we make the following recommendations for the 2020 budget:

Income Security Programs:

- **Recommendation #1:** Increase social assistance rates to reflect real costs of living, including housing costs based on average market rents, utility costs, the cost of a nutritious food basket, transportation, communication devices including telephone and internet, all personal basic needs, and costs that people with disabilities experience based on their specific needs. Rates should also increase with inflation.
- **Recommendation #2:** Maintain the current definition of a "person with a disability" for the purposes of eligibility for the Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP). The proposed change to align with federal program definitions would disentitle persons with disabilities in need.
- **Recommendation #3:** Ensure sufficient funding, inter-ministerial collaboration and administrative alignment so that OW and ODSP recipients receive wrap-around services, such as childcare, housing, mental health treatment, addictions treatment, and employment supports necessary to achieve their personal goals.
- **Recommendation #4:** Maintain the independence and appellate functions of the Social Benefits Tribunal in order to ensure that administrative social assistance decisions do not wrongly deny supports that Ontarians need to meet their most basic needs. Invest in improving first-level decision making and in filling Social Benefit Tribunal vacancies.
- **Recommendation #5:** Make the Canada-Ontario Housing Benefit available to social assistance recipients who are tenants, without any clawback of OW or ODSP benefits.

Workers' Rights:

- **Recommendation #6:** Increase the number of inspectors under the *Occupational Health and Safety Act* and the *Employment Standards Act*, in order to ensure safe working conditions and proper pay for Ontario's workers.
- **Recommendation #7:** Immediately increase the minimum wage to \$15 per hour, restore annual indexation to the Consumer Price Index, and implement laws to ensure that workers who do similar work receive equal pay.
- **Recommendation #8:** Reinstate 10 Personal Emergency Leave Days, including seven days as paid leave.

Legal Aid Ontario:

- **Recommendation #9:** Reverse the cuts to Legal Aid Ontario and make significant investments in access to justice for Ontario's workers and social assistance recipients.