

How to take action to end poverty with the BILL C-233 PETITION

1. Bill C-233, An Act to Eliminate Poverty in Canada was introduced as a Private Member's Bill by NDP MP Jean Crowder. **The Act to Eliminate Poverty in Canada is the result of extensive consultation with anti-poverty groups and reflects the goals of the *Dignity for All* campaign (www.dignityforall.ca)**. Although Private Member's Bills have a slim chance of getting enacted, the process of debating the bill can help to educate and build support for such legislation among MPs and can be a good way to press for future governments to introduce similar legislation. The full text of Bill C-233 can be found here: <http://parl.gc.ca/HousePublications/Publication.aspx?Docid=5100295&file=4>
2. **This petition has been designed** to conform to House of Commons rules **so that it can be presented in the House of Commons by Members of Parliament**. That is why it is a hard copy petition, not an electronic petition as Make Poverty History usually sends out. This petition has been certified as correct by the Clerk of Petitions of the House of Commons.
3. **Photocopy the petition** (it can be reproduced on two sides to save paper) and ask your friends and neighbours to sign it. You could also distribute it to volunteers who agree to gather signatures. The best way to get signatures quickly is to take the petition to regular meetings of churches, unions, anti-poverty or student groups where people are likely to be sympathetic to the cause and get everyone present to sign on. Alternatively a petition drive can be organized and have volunteers gather signatures at public places on selected days. This is a way to give the issue more public visibility.
4. **When you have 25 or more signatures, contact your MP and ask them to present the petitions from their constituents in the House of Commons**. If you have a petition signed by 25 or more people it can be presented to the House of Commons. There is a 15 minute time slot in the agenda of the House every day for presenting petitions. Generally MPs are expected to present petitions from their constituents even if they don't support the cause. You can find your MP and contact info at: www.parl.gc.ca

The best thing would be to arrange a meeting with your MP when you could discuss Bill C-233 and poverty issues and hand over the signed petitions. Ask for a commitment on presenting the petitions to the House of Commons and ask to have a report back on the date they will be presented so you can check in the record of debates (or Hansard) online at:

<http://www2.parl.gc.ca/housechamberbusiness/ChamberSittings.aspx?View=H&Language=E&Mode=1&Parl=40&Ses=3>.

If a meeting cannot be arranged, try to set up a phone call with the MP or failing that send a letter with the petitions attached asking that they be presented in the House of Commons. Be sure to ask for a reply as to whether they will present them and if so on what day they plan to do so.

5. **If your MP refuses** to make a commitment to present the petitions, then send them to the Dignity for All Campaign at #501-309 Cooper Street, Ottawa, ON K2P 0G5 . We will arrange for another MP to present them to the House of Commons.
6. **Please report back to the Dignity for All Campaign** by sending an email to dignity@dignityforall.ca telling us how many signatures you gathered and which MP you have sent your petitions to.
7. **For more information** or if you have any questions please contact Dignity for All at dignity@dignityforall.ca or phone 1-800-810-1076 or 1-800-667-8046.

PETITION TO THE HOUSE OF COMMONS on BILL C-233 an Act to Eliminate Poverty in Canada

We, the undersigned residents of Canada, draw attention to the House of the following:

- Poverty affects over ten percent of Canadians, and disproportionately affects aboriginal peoples, recent immigrants, people with disabilities, youth and children;
- Poverty leads to poor health, such that individuals living in poverty suffer more health problems and have lower life expectancy than those who are not living in poverty;
- Poverty and social exclusion constitute obstacles to protecting and respecting human rights, including those guaranteed in the *International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights* and the *Canadian Human Rights Act*;
- The effects of poverty and social exclusion impede the economic and social development of society as a whole and threaten its cohesion and progress;
- Canada ranks far behind most other developed countries in the extent of poverty among working age adults and among children;
- Implementation of poverty reduction plans in several Canadian provinces and other countries has shown poverty can be reduced;
- A majority of provincial and territorial governments have adopted poverty reduction strategies, but are limited in the extent they are able to reduce poverty in their jurisdiction without support of the federal government;
- Bill C-233 would require the federal government to develop and implement a strategy for poverty elimination in consultation with the provincial, territorial, municipal and Aboriginal governments and with civil society organizations;

We call on Parliament to ensure swift passage of Bill C-233, an Act to Eliminate Poverty in Canada.

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When you have 25 or more signatures please send the petition to your Member of Parliament and ask him/her to present them to the House of Commons. You can find your MP and address at: www.parl.gc.ca

PETITION TO THE HOUSE OF COMMONS on BILL C-233
an Act to Eliminate Poverty in Canada

We call on Parliament to support Bill C-233, an Act to Eliminate Poverty in Canada.

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