

NDP Caucus News

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Government's Income Support Changes Won't Lift People Out of Poverty

NDP Leader Jim Dinn (St. John's Centre) says recently announced changes to the Income Support Programs are needed, but they fall short. Too many people will continue to be trapped in poverty if government does not also raise mandated income thresholds.

"At least government recognizes the need to update the Income Support Program, but I have to question how they landed on these changes," said Dinn. "Adjusting the monthly support so that individuals living together don't see their payments reduced is a positive step, and one that was long overdue. But let's be clear: this change alone will not lift people out of poverty. The support amount remains far below a livable income."

"The housing piece shows just how out of touch government is with the reality renters are facing, particularly those on fixed incomes," Dinn continued. "Increasing the housing allowance might help, but only if it reflects the real cost of rent today. And even then, without rent control in place, what protection is there for someone on income support whose rent jumps by \$100? Government is still failing to deal with the root of the problem by not investing in non-market, community based housing."

He says the province continues to miss the mark on addressing the social determinants of health.

"I continue to question why government won't sign on to the federal Pharmacare program, something that would benefit so many here in Newfoundland and Labrador," said Dinn. "Yes, an increase to the vision care allowance is welcome, but why stop there? Signing on to Pharmacare would provide access to contraceptives and diabetes medication for all."

"Removing the HST from home heating would give real relief to people on fixed incomes, and to everyone trying to affordably heat their homes. Back-to-school support is good, but imagine the impact if government removed provincial HST from children's goods, as the NDP has called for. We're still waiting on the Minister to present the basic income report to the committee. Real solutions can't wait."

"Government loves to talk about the social determinants of health, but they clearly don't understand what that means when it comes to taking action."

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