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February 12, 2004

Dear Prime Minister Martin and Premier Campbell

Attached please find a letter regarding B.C.'s 24 month time limit on eligibility for welfare. This letter was written and endorsed by 129 signatories before the B.C. Government announced on February 6, 2004 that it would add a new 25th exemption to the time limit.

It appears that this 25th exemption waives the application of the time limit to those who are complying with their employment plans and seeking work, and will thus exempt thousands of B.C. residents from having their welfare cut off or reduced. This makes the time limits redundant.

While we are encouraged and relieved by this promise of a waiver, the requests in our original letter remain relevant. Despite the 25th exemption, the B.C. legislation defines welfare as a time-limited benefit, rather than one that will be provided based on need.

The B.C. time limit provisions should be rescinded and conditions should be attached to the new Canadian Social Transfer to ensure that no such time limits are imposed again.

Sincerely,

W. Robert Arnold
Michael Goldberg
Shelagh Day
on behalf of the signatories.