

Where have the BC Liberal candidates landed on poverty reduction?

What is your position in regards to the BC Poverty Reduction Coalition's open letter? Do you support the legislated targets and timelines outlined in the letter? Would you create a cross government secretariat with a lead minister? What actions would you take in the 7 policy action areas outlined in the letter?

CHRISTY CLARK – No plan but minor related initiatives

While the Clark campaign did respond to our survey, there was no commitment to a poverty reduction plan. She did mention eliminating the \$6 training wage, increasing the minimum wage, and increasing the Working Income Tax Benefit. She mentions her 'Families First platform', which can be found on her website: www.christyclark.ca. We are unclear at this point, as to how this platform will directly reduce poverty in BC.

ED MAYNE – No plan but an admission that we need one for children in BC

We did not hear back from the Mayne campaign. On his website, however, Mayne does mention that child poverty is a problem in BC and states: "We need a plan to reduce child poverty in this province. I will commit to immediately call for a gathering of all those concerned to have a frank discussion and to develop an action plan." Details of this plan are not offered. His website is: www.edmayne.ca.

GEORGE ABBOTT – Partial plan

Abbott is the only Liberal leadership candidate to clearly support legislated targets and timelines for poverty reduction. He acknowledges BC's problem of the "working poor" and government benefits that claw back too early. Abbott plans to launch a public engagement initiative to develop a strategy to reduce child poverty. The plan is limited to children and does not include any immediate policy actions although, Abbott too says the minimum wage should increase. While we welcome a public engagement process, we are concerned that such a process could greatly delay needed action. Abbott's plan would include five-and ten-year targets, the creation of a new dedicated agency and may also include a minister dedicated to pursuing those objectives. Abbott's news release on reducing child poverty is on his website at: <http://www.georgeabbott.ca/2011/01/28/abbott-proposes-public-engagement-on-reducing-child-poverty/>.

KEVIN FALCON – No plan but minor related initiatives

The Falcon campaign team declined to respond to our survey. However, on Falcon's website he does mention policy changes such as raising the minimum wage as well as a vague reference to creating childcare options for families. His website is: www.kevinfalcon.com.

MIKE DE JONG - No plan but minor related initiatives

We did not hear back from De Jong. We could not find any information on his website regarding specific policy changes for poverty reduction, although he did mention raising the minimum wage. His website is: www.mikedejong.com.