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Releases

Poverty Free BC week February 25 to March 4 to highlight need for government action to tackle rising poverty, inequality in BC

Vancouver - A week of events to highlight the depths of poverty and inequality in BC and the need for the next provincial government to take action through a concrete poverty reduction strategy kicks off in Vancouver Saturday, February 25.

The launch event is a panel discussion on Good Jobs, Good Wages that focuses in on concrete measures that can be taken to tackle the rise of precarious work and stagnant wages, from 1:30 pm to 3:30 pm in room 1300, SFU Segal Building, 500 Granville Street in Vancouver.

The week has been organized by the BC Federation of Labour and the BC Poverty Reduction Coalition. It concludes with a rally for a Poverty Free BC on Saturday, March 4 from 12 pm to 2 pm at the Vancouver Public Library downtown.

More information about events through the week is posted at www.povertyfreebc.ca.

Poverty and inequality facts

- BC is the only province in Canada without a poverty reduction plan.
- There are more than 700,000 British Columbians living in poverty.
- 500,000 BC workers earn poverty wages, less than $15 per hour.

- One in five children in BC live in poverty.
- Income assistance rates for individuals have been frozen at $610 per month by the BC Liberals for the last 11 years.
- Failing to address poverty costs BC an estimated $8-9 billion per year in costs like health care, policing, and lost economic opportunities.
- A poverty reduction plan includes improvements to wages, welfare, housing, childcare, education, health and reducing barriers for members of equity seeking groups.
- BC has the highest inequality in Canada with the wealthiest 20% owning 75% of the total wealth in BC while the poorest 20% are in debt.