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Releases

BCFED’s Lanzinger to take Welfare Food Challenge starting Sunday

Vancouver - BC Federation of Labour President Irene Lanzinger will join dozens of British Columbians from all walks of life to participate in the Welfare Food Challenge and eat for an entire week with a budget of only $18, all that Premier Christy Clark and her government give to single welfare recipients to survive.

Sponsored by the Raise the Rates Coalition, the challenge starts Sunday October 16—World Food Day—and ends October 23. It’s a way for anti-poverty advocates to press for increases in income assistants rates, which for a single person have been frozen for nine years by the BC Liberals at $610 a month.

“I took part in the challenge two years ago when participants had $21 for the week so I have some experience of what’s ahead,” says Lanzinger. “But this time will be tougher because we even have even less money to buy food.”

Lanzinger says she’s deeply alarmed by growing poverty and inequality in BC, whether it be the plight of the 200,00 British Columbians on welfare; the 500,000 BC workers earning poverty wages; or the many families who aren’t getting ahead because of stagnant wages and skyrocketing costs.

“I fully support efforts to make poverty an election issue in 2017,” says Lanzinger, “especially because we live in a province of abundant wealth. But when it comes to how that wealth is shared, we are a deeply unequal society where a small group controls most of it.

“These inequities—such deep poverty in such a rich province—reflect the choices that Premier Clark and her government have made and whose side they are on. And they reflect the choices that voters can make next May.”