



MEDIA RELEASE

For Immediate Release

Legal advocates support action on affordable housing

Belleville/Feb. 19, 2013 - Local legal advocates are looking for support from area politicians on a federal private members bill dealing with affordable housing.

If passed, Bill C-400 would require the federal government to develop a national affordable housing strategy in consultation with the provinces and other stakeholders. The Community Advocacy & Legal Centre, based in Belleville, would like to see the bill supported by local members of parliament when it receives second reading. That is scheduled for Feb 27, 2013.

The bill was supported at first reading by all opposition parties, says Dan McCabe, a lawyer with CALC. But the bill will likely need the support of at least 13 Conservative MPs to move past second reading. We want to encourage our local MPs Daryl Kramp, Rick Norlock and Scott Reid to support the bill.

Those in favour of Bill C-400, say that recognizing housing as a human right does not mean that governments have to provide housing to everyone. Instead, the intention of the bill is that the federal government take a leadership role in ensuring adequate housing. The bill, introduced by NDP MP Marie-Claude Morin, calls on them to work with all levels of government, non-profits, the private sector and key stakeholders. The goal is to adopt a comprehensive strategy to address the causes of homelessness and to ensure that, within a reasonable time, no one will be denied access to adequate housing in Canada.

As Canadians, we have core values, says McCabe. The right to housing for all is central to our dignity, security and equality. It goes far beyond partisan politics.

CALC and other advocates of Bill C-400 also believe that ensuring Canadians have affordable and healthy places to live makes sense for the economy. They point to the high cost of having people living on streets or in emergency shelters.

Reliable estimates say that 400,000 Canadians are homeless and another 1.5 million lack access to secure housing, says McCabe. Apart from being morally responsible, developing a national affordable housing strategy and encouraging investment in affordable housing is a smart economic decision. The federal government has estimated that every dollar invested in housing reaps a benefit of \$1.40 to the Canadian economy.

CALC is encouraging people to contact their federal members of parliament to ask them to support Bill C-400.

Anyone who wants more information about Bill C-400 will find it at <http://dignityforall.ca/C400>.

The Community Advocacy & Legal Centre (CALC) is a non-profit community legal clinic principally funded by Legal Aid Ontario. The clinic was founded in 1980 and provides poverty law services to low income residents of Hastings, Prince Edward and Lennox & Addington counties. The clinic's main office is in Belleville, with satellite locations in Trenton, Picton, Napanee, Amherstview, Bancroft and Madoc. For more information, visit CALC's website at www.communitylegalcentre.ca.

- 30 -

For further information about the contents of this press release, please call Michele Leering, Executive Director, at 613-966-8686, ext 27 or Toll Free at 1-877-966-8686, ext 27.

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