LIFT THE FLOOR: WOULD A UNIVERSAL BASIC INCOME GUARANTEE A GOOD LIFE FOR ALL CANADIANS?

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What is Basic Income?

- **Definition:** As many definitions as people talking about it; always about redistribution, not predistribution (job numbers and quality)

- **What problem does it solve?** Poverty? Red tape? Precarious work?

- **How much does it cost?** More than what we spend now? The same? Less?
Three Questions about BI

- How much
- Who gets it
- Who pays
How Much?

- 4 ideas about BI in Canada
- 2 pilots
- Manitoba Mincome (1974-78) 9 basic incomes, ~=$21k fam of 4, 60% of poverty line
- Ontario Basic Income Pilot (2017) $16,989/yr (single); $24,027/yr (couple) 75% of poverty line, + $500 if living with disability; lose 50% of earned income [100% of EI benefits].
How Much?

- 4 ideas about BI in Canada
- 2 proposals, never implemented
- Macdonald Commission (1985) roll up all federal income supports, offer $2,750 per adult, $759 per child (≈ $5,039 per adult, $1,647 per child)

House Report (Newfoundland (1993))
$3,000 per adult, $1,500 per child (≈ $4,818 per adult, $2,404 per child)
Who gets it

- Everyone? (Seniors currently get a guarantee of no less than ~$18K, Kids < 6 $6.6K, Kids 6-17 $5.6K from feds alone today)

“Why Not Cut Everyone A $2K Cheque?”

- $24,000 a year
- $48,000 a year for a household of two adults
Who pays for any level of UBI for the working aged? The working aged.
What will we choose to give one another?

- Decent work, yah or nah?
- Basic services? (Medicare is profoundly redistributive, what about potential impact on inequality of housing, childcare, dental/vision care, pharmacare, internet?)
- Income supports not all we redistribute
- Shouldn’t we aim for more than basic? Minimum? Time to get strategic.
- Watch what you wish for, for you may get it.