



April 15, 2020

The Right Honourable Prime Minister
House of Commons
Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0A6

Dear Mr. Trudeau,

We, the undersigned, are a grouping of student organizations and coalitions calling on the federal government to extend the Canada Emergency Response Benefit (CERB) to all students and recent graduates, regardless of employment status and previous income.

Students and recent graduates who are just starting their careers now face the most uncertain job market since the Great Depression. The devastating economic impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic are being felt across the country. While the government's focus has understandably been on ensuring that those who lost their livelihoods in the last few weeks have the support they need to keep a roof over their heads and put food on the table; students and recent graduates also find themselves in an extremely precarious financial situation.

Because of skyrocketing tuition fees and the rise of the cost of living, the more than 2 million students in Canada were already in a dire financial situation. The COVID-19 crisis has only exacerbated this. On top of tuition fees, students also need to pay for rent, groceries and other necessities, for which they usually rely on summer employment. With non-essential businesses across the country shutting down to fight the virus, we hear from students every day who tell us they have lost their jobs, summer internships and employment offers. In addition, graduating students are entering a job market where 4.5 million people have already been laid off.

Your government has told students that you have heard our pleas, that you are listening, and that more help is on the way. On Wednesday, April 8th, you announced the expansion of the Canada Summer Jobs (CSJ) program. While a welcome first step to address the financial uncertainty students and recent graduates are facing, your government estimates the CSJ will only create 70,000 jobs. Yet, there are millions of students and recent graduates in Canada who have lost their income or employment opportunities. Furthermore, not all students are eligible for the CSJ due to eligibility restrictions, most notably students over 30 and international students.

By introducing CERB, the government has acknowledged that subsidizing employment alone will not meaningfully mitigate the devastation that this economic crisis is causing workers and businesses across Canada. It is clear that students and recent graduates are also in need of income support right now. We continue to believe that the only way to ensure that no one is left behind during the COVID-19 pandemic is by making all students and recent graduates eligible for the CERB. We, the undersigned, readily anticipate the introduction of this measure.

Sincerely,

Don't Forget Students
Canadian Federation of Students
Carleton University Graduate Students' Association
Carleton University Student Association
University of Windsor Graduate Student Society
University of Windsor Students' Alliance
York University Graduate Students' Association
Brandon University Students' Union
L'Association générale des étudiants de l'Université Sainte-Anne
University of New Brunswick Graduate Students' Association
The University of Guelph's Graduate Student Association Executive
Nipissing University Student Union
Lakehead University Student Union
Algoma University Students' Union
Grenfell Campus Student Union
Alma Mater Society of Queen's University
University of Guelph Central Students' Association
Brock University Graduate Students' Association
Laurentian University Graduate Students' Association
Student Union of NSCAD University
McMaster Students Union
University of Toronto Mississauga Students' Union
Continuing Education Students' Association of Ryerson
York Federation of Students
Trent Central Student Association
Association of Part-Time Undergraduate Students at the University of Toronto
University of Toronto Students' Union
Memorial University of Newfoundland Students' Union
Graduate Students' Union of the Memorial University of Newfoundland



University of King's Students' Union
University of Winnipeg Students' Association
Student Association of George Brown College
Simon Fraser Student Society
University of Western Ontario Society of Graduate Students Executive
University of Toronto Graduate Students' Union
Wilfrid Laurier University Graduate Students' Association
Glendon College Students' Union
Public Service Alliance of Canada
Ontario College of Art and Design Student Union
University of Saskatchewan Graduate Students' Association