

The Most Reverend
COLIN R. JOHNSON
Archbishop of Toronto
and Metropolitan of Ontario



Diocese of Toronto
Anglican Church of Canada

EX14.1.115

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Submitted by Councillor McConnell

January 11, 2012

Councillor Pam McConnell
Toronto City Hall
100 Queen St. W., Suite A7
Toronto M5H 2N2

Dear Councillor ^{Pam} McConnell:

I write to you as the leader of the Anglican Church in Toronto out of grave concern about the impact of proposed cuts to Toronto's 2012 budget. If implemented, these cuts could have serious impacts on our city's most vulnerable citizens.

As I told a City Hall meeting on Jan.4, a budget is a moral document. It reflects our values, or should do so. Proposed budget cuts include closure of three child care centres, closure of three transitional housing projects, the closure of swimming and wading pools, service cuts to TTC routes, and a drop to the number of affordable housing units being repaired or renovated from 1034 in 2011 to 400 in 2014, as well a \$6-million cut to the Toronto Community Housing Corporation.

All of these cuts, as well as many others I have not mentioned, threaten to make the lives of our disadvantaged neighbours even more difficult. Unlike middle-class people, the poor have no alternatives to public services. They can't join fitness clubs if their local pool closes; most rely on the TTC to travel, often long distances, to work; and the closure of child care centres would likely mean that many would have to give up their jobs in order to care for their children. Closing transitional housing projects, which have helped many people to leave the streets, while cutting back on affordable housing when a record 81,000 households are waiting for affordable housing, will mean that more people are without adequate housing or even without any housing at all.

We Anglicans are keenly aware of the needs of low-income people, because we work with them every day. Most of the roughly 100 Anglican parishes in the City of Toronto help low-income people meet their basic needs, through foodbanks, meal programs, Out of the Cold services and similar programs. We also serve the poor through our FaithWorks-funded agencies, such as All Saints Community Centre, Flemingdon Park Ministry and the Toronto Urban Native Ministry. Tens of thousands of people are helped through our efforts – yet we are keenly aware that we cannot fill the gap created by inadequate public services.

We realize that the City of Toronto faces challenges in balancing its budget. However, we also believe that the budget must not be balanced at the expense of the poorest among us. Options for increasing government revenues are available, and should be pursued. We need to engage in advocacy with the provincial and federal governments for a more fair sharing of tax revenues with municipalities.



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I urge you to give the concerns which I have raised careful consideration. They are shared by many other Anglicans in Toronto, as well as other concerned citizens. You will be hearing from them.

Thank you for the work you do. My father was a provincial politician so I know from first-hand experience that your job is by no means easy. However, I encourage you to consider both the impact of Toronto's 2012 budget decisions, and the values that should guide those decisions.

I look forward to your response to the issues that I have raised, and to continued work with you as we work towards developing a city and a society that reflects our best values.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Colin R. Johnson", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

The Most Rev. Colin R. Johnson
Archbishop of Toronto