



PRESS RELEASE

OTTAWA, ON (June 04, 2018)

BISHOP URGES OTTAWA VOTERS TO MAKE HOUSING A PRIORITY

The Anglican Diocese of Ottawa is urging the federal and Ontario governments to give increased priority to programs that help the most vulnerable in the community.

In a public statement the bishop, The Right Reverend John Chapman, calls on Ottawa voters to make homelessness and affordable housing an issue in the June 7 election campaign. He says the Diocese is committed to its Community Ministries which operate Cornerstone Housing for Women, Centre 454, St. Luke's Table, and The Well drop-in centres. "We cannot resolve the issues of poverty and homelessness alone," the bishop said. "They require major support from all levels of government."

The bishop's statement coincides with a submission by the Diocese encouraging the federal government to strengthen its proposals for a human rights-based approach to housing.

While the federal proposals are commendable, the submission says, they don't actually provide for legislation that will protect Canada's most vulnerable, including indigenous people and women.

"We are particularly concerned that women's equal right to adequate housing be reflected in all aspects of the National Housing Strategy," the submission says. It cites evidence from a national advisory committee that existing definitions of homelessness discriminate against women because of their unique needs.

Certification through legislation of a human rights-based approach is vital to the effectiveness of a national strategy, the submission says. Bishop Chapman joined last fall with the Canadian Alliance to End Homelessness (CAEH), the Canadian Housing and Renewal Association (CHRA) and the United Nations Special Representative on the Right to Adequate Housing to call on Canada to meet its obligation as a signatory to the UN International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights.

Bishop Chapman said Ottawa, like most large Ontario cities, is facing a crisis of homelessness. Solutions require the support and cooperation of all orders of government.

"We look to the next Ontario government to support a portable National Housing Benefit in addition to, not in place of, existing provincial programs."