

How to take action with the **BILL C-545 PETITION Campaign**

1. Bill C-545, An Act to Eliminate Poverty in Canada was introduced as a Private Member's Bill by NDP MP Tony Martin. It was seconded by Liberal MP Mike Savage and Bloc MP Yves Lessard, so has broad support from a number of parties. **The Act to Eliminate Poverty in Canada is the result of extensive consultation with anti-poverty groups and reflects the goals of the Dignity for All campaign.** Although Private Member's Bills have a slim chance of getting enacted, the process of debating the bill can help to educate and build support for such legislation among MPs and can be a good way to press for future governments to introduce similar legislation. The full text of Bill C-545 can be found here: <http://www2.parl.gc.ca/sites/lop/legisinfo/index.asp?Language=E&Session=23&query=7060&List=toc>
2. **This petition has been designed** to conform to House of Commons rules **so that it can be presented in the House of Commons by Members of Parliament.** That is why it is a hard copy petition, not an electronic petition. This petition has been certified as correct by the Clerk of Petitions of the House of Commons.
3. The aim is to **target 50 MPs who are in swing ridings** whose margin of victory was less than 10% of the vote. Asking these MPs to present petitions from their riding to the House of Commons is a way to serve notice to all parties that anti-poverty activists are organizing to make poverty a key issue in the next election. This is one of the best ways to get all the parties to pay attention as they are all hyper-sensitive about the key swing ridings. A list of the key swing ridings is available here. [include link and post the list] Organizational supporters of Dignity for All and Make Poverty History are asked to help recruit local activists in these ridings who could organize sign-on campaigns.
4. It would be helpful to **identify a coordinator** in each riding for the Bill C-545 Petition campaign who would be willing to collect the signed petitions. Her/his name and address should be typed into the bottom of the petition form.
5. **Photocopy the petition** (it can be reproduced on two sides to save paper) and distribute it to volunteers who agree to gather signatures. The best way to get signatures quickly is to take the petition to regular meetings of churches, unions, anti-poverty or student groups where people are likely to be sympathetic to the cause and get everyone present to sign on. Alternatively a petition drive can be organized and have volunteers gather signatures at public places on selected days. This is a way to give the issue more public visibility.
6. **Set a target date for gathering up all the petitions.** We are hoping to start having the petitions presented in the House of Commons in February 2011, so hopefully you can set a target date sometime in February. Petitions that drag on for a long period of time do not usually do very well so that is why we are putting a big push on this for January and February.
7. **Contact your MP and ask them to present the petitions from their constituents in the House of Commons.** If you have a petition signed by 25 or more people it can be presented to the House of Commons. There is a 15 minute time slot in the agenda of the House every day for presenting petitions. Generally MPs are expected to present petitions from their constituents even if they don't support the cause. The best thing would be to arrange a meeting of a small delegation with your MP when you could discuss the Bill and poverty issues and hand over the signed petitions. Ask for a commitment on presenting the petitions to the House of Commons and ask to have a report back on the date they will be presented so you can check in Hansard. If a meeting cannot be arranged a phone call with the MP would do.

8. If your MP refuses to make a commitment to present the petitions, then send them to **Dignity for All**, 1210 – 1 Nicholas Street, Ottawa ON K1N 7B7. We will arrange for another MP to present them to the House of Commons.
9. **Please report back to Dignity for All** by emailing dignity@dignityforall.ca the following information when you have presented your petitions to your MP. [or we could set up a form to gather this information on the web site.]

Contact information for petition coordinator:

Name of Member of Parliament:

Electoral District name:

Number of signatures that you have collected:

Date when petitions were handed over to your MP:

Date or week in which the MP has committed to present the petitions to the House of Commons:

10. **For more information** or if you have any questions please contact Dennis Howlett at Make Poverty History dhowlett@makepovertyhistory.ca or phone 613-740-1500.