



**UNITE HERE Local 75**

15 Gervais Drive, Suite 300, Toronto, ON M3C 1Y8

**Guled Warsame, President | Shelli Sareen, Secretary-Treasurer | Valrie Lue, Vice-President**

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March 17, 2020

**To:** The Right Honourable Justin Trudeau, Prime Minister  
Honourable Chrystia Freeland, Deputy Prime Minister and Committee Chair  
Honourable Jean-Yves Duclos, President of Treasury Board, and Committee Vice-chair

**Copies:**

Hon. Melanie Joly, Minister of Economic Development  
Pierre Laliberte, EI Worker Commissioner

**Dear Prime Minister Trudeau and Chairs of the Cabinet Committee on COVID-19:**

We are the Executive Leadership of UNITE HERE Local 75, which represents over 10,000 hospitality workers in the GTA. First I want to commend you and the Federal Government for the excellent work combating the spread of the virus and keeping Canadians safe.

Hotel and hospitality sector workers contribute significantly to the Canadian economy and in particular, businesses that rely on tourism. They are also among those most affected by COVID-19. Thousands of hotel workers have felt the impact of schedule reductions and increasingly, of layoffs from the job. Many are women with young children and with the closure of childcare centres and schools, bear a great financial strain if they must be absent from work to care for their children.

Unfortunately, there has been tremendous confusion and chaos as people prepare for the worst, as members and employers alike are facing one to three hour hold times for basic information about EI. Furthermore, as borders are closed and travel is restricted and the impact on our industry will be long lasting, we know our we and many will not be able to make ends meet on EI as it is currently structured.

We are reaching out to you for support and ask that you keep Hospitality workers in mind as you work on new government measures. Most importantly we need financial assistance immediately so our members can pay their rent and bills. We need the following:

1. A new requirement of 360 hours to qualify for either EI Regular or Sick benefits
2. A public announcement to employers with instructions on any changes to EI and how to complete Records of Employment for various scenarios.
3. A National Health Emergency Allowance for workers who don't qualify for EI
4. A waiver of the 1 week waiting week for both EI Regular and Sick benefits
5. A triple increase in the amount of the Canada Child Benefit
6. Dedicated COVID hotlines in different languages for all workers and for employers

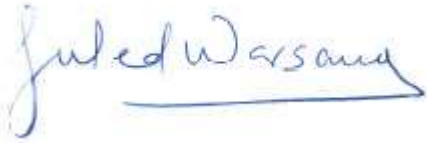
**Organize Here. Win Here. UNITE HERE!**

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7. Finally, as proposed in the Alternative Federal Budget 2020 released March 17, we propose that benefits be improved by increasing the benefit rate to at least 60% of previous earnings, and introducing a low-income supplement so claimants receive at least \$300 weekly.

At the point when the economy begins to recover, we will have other recommendations to put to you all to assist our industry in particular and our members' in their ability to return to work. Our members and their families' survival will depend on it. Should you require more information, we are happy to meet for further discussions.

Respectfully yours,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Guled Warsame". The signature is written in a cursive style with a horizontal line underneath the name.

Guled Warsame President UNITE HERE Local 75

A handwritten signature in brown ink that reads "Shelli Sareen". The signature is written in a cursive style.

Shelli Sareen Secretary-Treasurer UNITE HERE Local 75

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Valrie Lue". The signature is written in a cursive style.

Valrie Lue Vice-President UNITE HERE Local 75