

Policy Analysis Unessay

Assignment 2c: Rationale

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SSW-122-DLS1: Social Welfare in Canada

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For my unessay project, I have chosen to highlight deficiencies in the Persons With Disabilities (PWD) benefits program. This topic came to my attention while working on my “Policy in the News” analysis earlier this term and reviewing the plight of immigrants Jean-Pierre Kigonga and Sandrine Ekoko (Culbert & Sherlock, 2017). I wanted to carry on with this theme as I found the information about the annual earnings exemption within PWD extremely unfair and inhibiting for anyone relying on it to subsidize their livelihood. I have chosen the presentation format of collages with direct wording for a few reasons:

1. It allows me to divide my overall idea into specific topics and speaking points
2. It condenses copious amounts of information but still tells a story
3. The creativity of the medium will hopefully show a human aspect missing from the cold, unfeeling nature of government policy and newspaper headlines
4. It is simplistic in its presentation but damning in its evidence

Within the realm of PWD benefits, I have chosen 5 topics: Annual Earnings Exemption, Assessment Process, “Marriage-Like Relationships”, Value in the Workplace, and Stigma / Vulnerability. These were the re-occurring themes from the participants who replied to my interview questions (M. Cook, personal communication, November 7, 2023). Since the inception of the English Poor Laws of 1601 (Hick & Stokes, 2021, pg 426), not much has changed regarding the government’s opinions, views, and obligations towards people living with disabilities. According to Spencer van Vloten (2022), “most persons on provincial disability assistance in BC receive around \$1378 monthly, in a province where the average cost of rent per month alone is greater than that” (para. 1). Benefits received through PWD do not meet the bare minimums of a healthy lifestyle. Though these benefits are meager, they can also be snatched away at the drop of a hat leaving some of the most vulnerable individuals in our society in impossible situations.

As my topics show, living beyond what the government deems acceptable can have dire consequences. The problem with this is that these offenses are what the majority of people enjoy every day as their personal freedoms. Living together in a loving relationship, pursuing fulfillment in a career, privacy of information, the ability to save money, starting a family. These are all things we have the basic fundamental human right to pursue. Now imagine the income you depend on every month to keep you fed, clothed, and warm could disappear because you had the audacity to want more. That is the reality, and it is horribly depressing. It brings tears to my eyes writing this, understanding the financial manipulation at play and the destruction of self-worth, self-esteem, self-actualization based on cookie cutter prerequisites.

In researching this project, I have found that recent legislation brought into existence the Canada Disability Benefit (CDB) in June of this year. According to the Government of Canada

(2023, June 23), “With this legislation, the Government is delivering on its commitment to build a disability-inclusive Canada” (para. 3). The framework has now been laid and it is up the government of Canada to build on this promise of hope and inclusion. I sincerely hope this is the case because at the moment, 400 years of evidence would prove otherwise.

Reference

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[Disabled people in BC need marriage equality \(the-peak.ca\)](https://the-peak.ca/disabled-people-in-bc-need-marriage-equality)