

Sample Letter to send to PM & Treasurer

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To the Hon. Julia Gillard and Treasurer Wayne Swan,

I am strongly opposed to the Government's decision to cut welfare payments to single parents, and I urge you to support a reversal of this policy.

The Government's new welfare policy will force around 100,000 single parents, 90% of whom are women, on to Newstart unemployment payments when their youngest child turns eight. This will slash their weekly income by up to \$223 a fortnight, or 12.8%.

Around half of all single parents already work in low paid casual and part-time jobs. Unemployed single mothers whose only income comes from parenting payments live below the poverty line. As the Australian Council of Social Services states, "The reasons that the other half do not have paid jobs now include low skills, poor local job prospects, caring for a disabled child, and illness or disability."

Recipients of single parent payments tend to live in areas where unemployment is high, like Sydney's western suburbs where employment rates reach 10%. Work available is often in the evening and on weekends, and with lack of access to good quality, free childcare or adequate public transport, single parents face a series of systemic obstacles to finding suitable employment.

These cuts will only entrench the cycle of poverty that many single parent families find themselves in. A recent Anglicare report showed that over 15% of children in Australia live in families unable to buy enough food.

As you will be aware, the Parliamentary Joint Committee on Human Rights stated last week that it was unable to conclude the cuts to single parent pension measures were compatible with human rights.

I do not believe that saving \$728m over 4 years to help balance the budget is worth the future lives of our children. One in five children are now living in poverty and these cuts are likely to increase this to one in four children.

Sincerely,

etc.

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The postal addresses are:

The Hon Julia Gillard MP
Prime Minister
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Wayne Swan MP
Treasurer
PO Box 6022, House of Representatives
Parliament House, CANBERRA ACT 2600