

For Immediate Release
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STUDENTS REACT TO COVID RELIEF ANNOUNCEMENT

HALIFAX/KJIPUKTUK - On Wednesday, the Nova Scotia government announced a one-time COVID-19 relief grant of \$875 for eligible post-secondary students.

“Students in Nova Scotia are facing increasing financial instability due to rising tuition and living costs,” said Canadian Federation of Students-Nova Scotia Chairperson, Kris Reppas. “Any financial assistance from the government in the form of grants is welcomed and will provide some relief for the students who receive it. However, there are many students, including international students, who will not be able to access this financial relief. We would like to see this grant extended to include international students.”

Despite living, working, and studying in Nova Scotia, and paying several times higher tuition fees than domestic students, international students do not benefit from the same financial supports or basic services available to other Nova Scotians, such as Student Assistance loans or public healthcare. International students are not eligible for Medical Services Insurance until 13 months after their arrival to Nova Scotia, forcing them to purchase expensive private health care coverage. Over the past two years, international students have also been excluded from most federal and provincial Covid-relief measures and have faced challenges accessing Covid testing, vaccines, and proof of vaccination.

“The reality is that a one-time grant for \$875, while beneficial, does little to meet the rapidly increasing cost of living or skyrocketing tuition students are struggling to pay,” said Reppas.

At present, undergraduate domestic students in Nova Scotia are paying the highest tuition fees in the country. Additionally, the average price of a two-bedroom apartment in Halifax has increased 43% in the last five years while minimum wage has only gone up 15%.

“Students need substantial, long-term support,” said Reppas, “which is why Premier Houston’s government needs to take measures like freezing tuition for all students—domestic and international—, providing all international students MSI upon arrival, implementing permanent rent control, and raising the minimum wage to \$20 an hour.”

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The Canadian Federation of Students is the oldest and largest national student organization in Canada, representing over 530,000 college, undergraduate and graduate students across the country.

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