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## CANADIAN ALLIANCE OF STUDENT ASSOCIATIONS

Statement by:

The Honourable Diane Bellemare

Tuesday, November 28, 2017

## THE SENATE

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[Translation]

### CANADIAN ALLIANCE OF STUDENT ASSOCIATIONS

**Hon. Diane Bellemare (Legislative Deputy to the Government Representative in the Senate):** Honourable senators, the Canadian Alliance of Student Associations, or CASA, represents roughly 255,000 students and 27 associations. In April, it published an important report entitled Student (Un)Employment in Canada.

[English]

I was very impressed by the quality of this report and its comprehensive analysis of the problems faced by young people making the transition from school to the job market.

[Translation]

The report very clearly outlines young people's aspirations when it says, and I quote:

CASA envisions a country where all youth, students and recent graduates who want to work have opportunities to do so, where they can make the most of their skills and abilities, and where they earn a living that allows them to live comfortably while contributing to the broader economy and society.

[English]

These young students and I share the same belief, one that I have worked toward for almost 40 years. It is that productive and suitable employment is a fundamental and universal goal. This goal is referred to by the United Nations and international organizations as the goal of full employment.

[Translation]

Although the official statistics show an upturn in employment in Canada and Quebec, and many people are talking about a labour shortage and even full employment, not everyone is benefitting from the upturn in the job market.

According to the CASA report, the youth unemployment rate is twice the national average, or around 13 per cent, and underemployment is not uncommon and affects nearly 20 per cent of young people with a university degree. Again according to the report, the number of young people in temporary, part time, or underpaid jobs is higher than the national average, and meanwhile, the average debt for recent graduates was upwards of \$26,000 in 2015.

[English]

I met with the representatives of the alliance just this morning to discuss their proposals regarding the transition from school to work.

Speaking with them, I realized that what these students want is precisely what the European Union has committed to with its member countries: to put in place what they call a youth employment guarantee.

[Translation]

Transitioning young people into the job market is an urgent matter because our population is aging and the working age population is starting to shrink. CASA is asking us to study this issue.

Thank you for your attention, honourable colleagues.

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