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Economics

1. According to Statistics Canada, economic inequality has been on the rise since the 1970s, and as of 2005, the richest 10% of income earners controlled almost 60% of all wealth. How will your party reverse this trend and reduce the growing levels of economic inequality in Ontario?

The Green Party's economic plan rewards hard work and stimulates job creation. We achieve this by lowering personal income taxes in a progressive way: by raising exemption levels for individuals and families. This approach benefits all taxpayers, especially those with lower incomes.

In addition, our plan lowers payroll taxes on small businesses to encourage local job creation. We will provide tax credits for seniors, rural and low-income residents to ease the burden of rising energy prices. We will also offer tax credits to businesses, home owners, and tenants to invest in saving energy.

We will lower personal income taxes by immediately increasing the personal tax exemption by \$2000. We will provide \$1.6 billion dollars over four years in refundable tax credits for home owners, tenants and businesses to invest in energy efficiency and building retrofits.

2. Since 2001, the combined federal-provincial corporate tax rate in Ontario has been reduced from 44 percent to 25 percent, supposedly in order to "create jobs." Yet the unemployment rate in the province is higher today than it was ten years ago. What concrete policies will your party implement to actually create good-paying, full-time jobs in Ontario?

The Green Party's economic plan establishes smart taxes and regulations that promote sustainable job creation. We will support innovation, creativity and job training to drive meaningful, long-term employment opportunities.

The Green Party will create a Green Building program that will help reduce energy bills and create thousands of jobs in the construction and trades sector in communities across the province.

Green MPPs will also support job creation through a \$150 million fund for research and development in emerging sectors of the economy. The Green Party will provide \$300 million over four years in refundable tax credits for businesses that participate in apprenticeship, co-operative and mentorship programs. We will also provide \$300 million over four years in refundable tax credits for businesses that participate in training and certification programs in job growth areas, including green building, biomedical technology, renewable energy and sustainable transportation.

The Green Party will delay corporate tax cuts for large businesses until the budget is balanced, and redirect a portion to lower small business payroll taxes by raising the exemption level for the Employer Health tax. This will

eliminate the Employer Health Tax for small businesses with payrolls less than \$800,000, making it easier for businesses to create more jobs.

3. According to opinion polls, a large majority of Ontarians support greater funding for social services like health care, child care, housing and education. What will your party do to ensure these programs are properly funded in both the short and long term?

Our economic plan focuses on eliminating the province's deficit so that our hard-earned tax dollars are spent on important public services and front line staff, not interest on debt. We are committed to balancing the budget by 2015, to ensure that we are able to fund quality programs in the long term.

The Green Party's fiscal plan prioritizes balancing Ontario's budget by 2015 – two years before the proposals of any other provincial party. Our deficit reduction plan is balanced and responsible. We are not proposing major tax cuts or major spending programs that we cannot afford. We do not believe in taking a sledge hammer to government, nor do we support its growth at unsustainable rates.

We believe a balanced approach to responsible fiscal planning is to: budget for growth in health care spending; hold other program spending at 2010-2011 levels; delay additional across the board corporate tax cuts for large corporations until after the budget is balanced in 2015; and freeze pay for non-unionized, public sector managers until the budget is balanced.

Under the Green plan, a few years of spending restraint saves almost \$30 billion in debt, reduces annual interest payments by \$2 billion, and enables sustainable increases in expenditures and tax cuts after the budget is balanced.

Labour

4. The Harmonized Sales Tax (HST) in Ontario is a regressive tax that makes low income and working class families pay a higher percentage of their income in sales taxes than wealthier Ontarians. What will your party do to end the HST and instead place the burden of taxes on those who can afford to pay them?

The Green Party of Ontario believes the most sensible solution to building long-term economic prosperity is to develop a smart tax system that encourages job creation and efficiency while balancing Ontario's budget by 2015.

We plan to implement a Green Tax Cut to create market incentives that reward individuals and businesses for reducing waste, improving efficiency and investing in 21st century green jobs, technology, products and services.

The Green Party believes that reducing business payroll taxes, income taxes and eliminating Ontario's deficit are higher priorities than reducing the HST at this time. We opposed the introduction of HST as it transfers decision making powers over what items to tax from the province to the federal government. The Green Party is prepared to review HST rates after the budget is balanced.

5. Statistics Canada reports that on average, unionized workers in Ontario enjoy 29% higher wages than non-unionized workers in the same line of work, as well as stronger pensions, superior health and safety standards, longer vacation time, better health and drug benefits, and more rights in the workplace. Does your

party believe that unions play a positive role in our economy? If so, what policies will your party implement to create a climate that is easier for unions to organize?

Unions have played a positive role in the economy, particularly in enhancing safety in the workplace.

The Green Party of Ontario recognizes the negotiated contracts of all active unions. The Green Party promotes democracy in unions and workplaces, and supports the democratic right of unions and workers to be engaged in determining their dues structure. The Green Party also believes in the right of part-time college workers to form a union as well as creating legislation to support students' union rights on campuses.

Federal trade policies that pit domestic manufacturers against foreign producers that do not have to meet the same safety, environmental and labour standards undermine the ability for employers and unions to provide good wages while remaining viable. These agreements are beyond the jurisdiction of the Green Party of Ontario, although we would encourage the federal government to include safety, environmental and labour standards in trade agreements.

6. While corporate profits, productivity and GDP have all increased consistently during the past thirty years, Statistics Canada reports that real hourly wages have been stagnant since 1980. Why do you think this has happened, and what does your party propose to change the situation?

The Green Party's Green Tax Cut plan seeks to lower personal income taxes by immediately increasing the personal tax exemption by \$2000. This approach, while reducing taxes for all income earners, focuses the benefits on workers with lower incomes. The Green Party believes that all workers should have jobs that provide adequate income to meet basic needs and will explore the best system for providing liveable take home wages.

Wage stagnation in manufacturing has occurred in part due to trade agreements mentioned in the previous question. These agreements are beyond the jurisdiction of the Green Party of Ontario, although we would encourage the federal government to include safety, environmental and labour standards in trade agreements.

Health Care

7. Our publicly administered, universal health care system is cherished throughout Ontario. More of our health services, however, are being de-funded and privatized. What policies will your party implement to ensure that health care in the province remains under public control and is accessible to everyone?

The Green Party believes in a sustainable, public health care system that provides every Ontarian with access to the quality health care they require, when and where they need it. Our plan will refocus the health care system on programs that will prevent illness in the first place while improving access and quality to care.

The Green Party supports tax credits to create incentives for individuals to engage in healthy lifestyle choices. We will implement school food programs and support community food security efforts to improve diets.

We will use powers of zoning and transportation planning to design communities that are safe and convenient for walking and cycling to school, and create a \$200 million fund for active transportation and complete streets initiatives.

We are committed to ensuring that our public health care system not only works for today, but is sustainable for the next generation.

8. There are more than 10,000 people in the province on waiting lists for home care, and 400,000 are actively seeking but cannot find a family doctor. What will your party do to fund more doctors, nursing positions and hospital beds throughout the province?

Green MPPs will focus on making better and more efficient use of health care dollars by investing in front line care instead of high-priced consultants. We recognize that investments in health promotion and illness prevention will help keep people healthy and save money in the long run.

We will re-prioritize funding to support doctors and other health professionals for family/community care clinics that are integrated with public health. This includes investing \$1.6 billion over four years in family and community care clinics and practices that team doctors with nurses, and other health care practitioners, including psychologists and counsellors.

Community Health Care Teams are the most efficient and effective way to deliver quality health care. We will expand each profession's scope of practice to match proven competencies. This enables the same services to be delivered by the most cost-effective provider, promotes patient choice and helps to address wait lists and the physician shortage.

The Green Party will also ensure that seniors receive the continuum of care they need by improving home care, transitional care, assisted living and long-term care in order to reduce stress on hospitals.

9. During the past fifteen years, more health services have been delisted from OHIP. Will your party make a commitment to end user fees and provide greater funding for eye care, home care and the Trillium Drug Program?

The Green Party fully supports a universal, publicly-funded health care system for Ontario. In re-prioritizing our current funding system, we would commit to ensuring items that are currently and necessarily covered by OHIP do not become de-listed.

We support and would maintain existing oral and eye care programs. Upon balancing the budget, the Green Party would support prioritizing oral and eye health, particularly as these programs relate to health promotion and preventive care.

We support prioritizing investments in home care, assisted living, transitional care, and long-term care. We will commit to providing funding for case managers to assist seniors in navigating the health care system. These investments are cost-effective and promote a better level of service.

The Green Party will provide additional tax credits for family members staying home to care for seniors, including seeking models that complement the Employment Insurance program. Home care is a key part of developing a sustainable health care system, and we will work to ensure that funding is actually implemented.

Education

10. Only 20% of young children today have access to regulated child care spaces in Ontario. What will you do in government to create more child care spaces? Will you commit to investing more in Early Childhood Education in the province?

The GPO supports and would maintain existing child care programs.

The Green Party acknowledges how important it is for families with young children across Ontario to be able to access high-quality affordable child care. Having this accessibility has been shown to be the fastest path out of poverty for families, offering the availability to look for employment and other opportunities.

We are committed to balancing the budget by 2015 to allow more funds to flow to services for people instead of interest payments. Upon balancing the budget, the GPO would support looking at options to extend child care.

11. What specific policies will your party implement to hire more teachers and reduce class sizes in primary and secondary schools in Ontario?

The Green Party recognizes the need for more teachers in primary and secondary schools with increasingly crowded class sizes. Green MPPs will work with administrators, parents, teachers, and other stakeholders to develop a plan to create a class size-to-teacher ratio that benefits primary and secondary school students while decreasing the burden of large class sizes from teachers.

12. Ontario university students with loans currently graduate with an average of \$37,000 of debt after a four-year degree, and our province has the lowest rate of public funding for colleges and universities - less than half the per student funding of Alberta. What will your party do to lower tuition fees and reduce student debt?

Green MPPs will freeze tuition rates for the 2012-13 school year and index tuition increases to the rate of inflation from 2013-15. We will hold tuition so students can plan and budget effectively, while increasing funding for university and college budgets to ensure a high quality of education. We will also work with student organizations and the federal government to revise the tax credit system for tuition to make it work better for students and their families

We are committed to reducing youth unemployment and helping independent business train the next generation of workers.

The Green Party advocates an additional \$300 million in refundable tax credits for businesses to participate in apprenticeship, mentoring and co-op programs. In addition, the Green economic plan calls for \$300 million over four years in refundable tax credits for businesses that participate in training and certification programs in job growth areas such as green building, biomedical technology, renewable energy and sustainable transportation.

The Green Party supports revising the College of Trades Act to reduce the ratio of journeyman to apprentices to one-to-one, like most other provinces, in order to open more jobs and training opportunities for our youth and workers seeking new career options.

The Environment

13. What policies will your party implement to reduce climate change and protect the environment, and how will you pay for them?

The Green Party is committed to the responsible management of our financial and natural capital. Our economic plan provides the right market incentives to reward people and businesses for efficient and sustainable practices while protecting the environment and reducing climate change.

Our tax plan reduces taxes on the things we want—income and job creation—and shifts them onto to things we don't—waste, pollution, and greenhouse gas emissions. Smart taxes create the market incentives that reward people and businesses for reducing waste and for generating jobs and income.

A simple, straight-forward price on carbon modelled after the popular British Columbia system, is the most efficient and cost effective approach to reducing greenhouse gas emissions. A small price on carbon provides market incentives to spur innovation and entrepreneurialism preparing our businesses to compete in a world with carbon pricing. Our proposed carbon tax is revenue-neutral and will be offset by personal and business tax cuts.

The Green Party is also committed to immediately putting coal-fired electricity generation on emergency stand-by and completely phasing it out by 2014. Coal is the most polluting form of power generation and we believe it has no place in Ontario's energy supply mix. We support converting existing coal plants into cleaner generation facilities so that Ontario utilizes these capital assets in ways that reduce health and environmental costs.

The Green Party would encourage the purchase of more fuel-efficient cars through a \$1000 credit for the most efficient 10% of cars on the market, and a \$1000 fee on the most inefficient 10%. We would raise tailpipe emission standards steadily over 25 years (measured by grams of CO₂ per kilometre) to encourage the market for low greenhouse gas emitting vehicles.

14. Nuclear power in the province of Ontario has been a decades-long testament to inefficiency, debt and environmental endangerment. The province of Ontario has never in its history completed a nuclear power plant on time or on budget. What will your party do to reduce our dependence on nuclear power and invest in environmentally friendly forms of energy?

The Green Party opposes the government's current plans for new nuclear reactors in Ontario. Given the large time and cost overruns associated with every nuclear power project to date in Ontario, we believe it is irresponsible to waste money on new nuclear.

Building new nuclear generation capacity would lock Ontario into an unaffordable energy future. Nuclear power is an inflexible supplier of base load power requiring billions in capital investment and a long time to deploy. On top of that, we still have no solution or cost estimate for the storage and disposal of nuclear waste.

Instead of committing to and relying on expensive nuclear, the Green Party has a responsible and realistic long-term energy plan that prioritizes energy efficiency and conservation, invests in affordable technology such as combined heat and power, and expands generation targets for safe, clean renewable energy, especially hydroelectricity.

The Green Party will create a comprehensive Green Building Program that includes \$1.6 billion over four years in refundable tax credits for home owners, tenants and businesses to invest in energy efficiency and building retrofits. This program will help individuals and businesses save money on energy bills and save the province

money by reducing the need for new supply, while also stimulating local job creation.

Our energy plan will expand generation targets for renewable energy, especially hydroelectricity, as a clean, reliable and less expensive alternative to new nuclear power. We will immediately negotiate agreements to increase hydro imports from Quebec and explore completing grid connections to Manitoba.

We will also increase hydroelectricity capacity in Ontario, especially micro-hydro projects, in partnership with communities. This, combined with the government's existing generation targets for other renewable energy sources--solar, wind, biomass, biogas--while using existing nuclear capacity to its life-end, could meet Ontario's electricity needs without investing in expensive new nuclear facilities.

15. One of the best ways to reduce our carbon footprint on the environment is public transportation. What will you do to make public transportation throughout the province more affordable and accessible to Ontarians?

The Green Party is committed to a comprehensive transportation strategy that reduces gridlock, lowers greenhouse gas emissions, provides incentives for fuel efficient and electric vehicles, and supports active transportation and public transit across Ontario.

The Green Party understands the costs of commuting to our economy, our personal finances and our mental and physical health. We will invest \$400 million in tax credits over four years for affordable commuter benefits to support ride sharing and car-pooling, flexible ways to get to work, and a refundable provincial tax credit for transit users.

The Green Party would help municipalities invest in sensible transportation solutions to improve the economy, our personal finance, and the health and well-being of all Ontarians.

We will maintain funding for public transit and work with municipalities to ensure that transit money is spent effectively on projects that maximize ridership. We will establish more high-occupancy vehicle lanes to encourage car-pooling and faster commute times to work.

The Green Party supports the purpose of gas tax transfers: to encourage municipalities to develop and enhance public transit systems. We can improve the program by enabling municipalities to pool resources and accumulate funds for major new transit options. This would help rural municipalities test the feasibility of a town-to-town public transit system.

The Green Party will revise the *Planning Act* to better support efficient, liveable communities, and will create a \$200 million fund for municipalities to invest in safe roads, active transportation and complete streets. By redesigning roads and streets with the safety and convenience of all users—not just drivers, but also pedestrians, cyclists and transit users—in mind, we will create more liveable communities for everyone.