

QUESTIONS

Economics

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

GPO: In order to address economic inequality and poverty in Ontario, the Green Party of Ontario (GPO) advocates for the legislation of a Guaranteed Annual Income (GAI) for all Ontarians. A GAI would ensure that every person of working age in Ontario who files an income tax return would have an income that at least meets the poverty level. It would reduce administrative costs and government bureaucracy. It would lead to a more efficient, effective, and dignified system of social assistance.

The GPO recommends that future budgets include provisions for establishing a public commission to determine how Ontario can best implement a program to provide a guaranteed annual income for all citizens.

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 today is higher than it was in 2001, while according to the International Monetary Fund, the amount of so-called “corporate dead money” in Canada now stands at over \$625 billion. What concrete policies will your party implement to actually create good-paying, full-time jobs in Ontario?

GPO: There are more than 300,000 small businesses in Ontario. They employ almost 3 million people from all walks of life. They range from corner stores to high tech start-ups, from organic farms to manufacturing firms. They foster entrepreneurship and innovation and keep money in our communities.

The other political parties focus on tax cuts and bailouts for big corporations. Instead of continuing to hand out tax cuts to large corporations that do not create many jobs, the GPO will help small businesses who are the greatest creators of good-paying, stable, and local jobs. The GPO will double the number of local jobs that small businesses can create without being taxed by doubling the Employer Health Tax (EHT) exemption from \$450,000 to \$900,000 for businesses with payrolls of less than \$5 million. We will pay for this plan by reversing the Liberals' Bay Street corporate tax cut by 1% and set the rate at 12.5% which is still less than the North American average.

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?

GPO: Like the majority of Ontarians, the GPO would like to see more funding directed towards health care, child care, housing and education. In regards to the health care system, the Green Party is a strong proponent of preventative health care measures to keep Ontarians healthy and to keep our health care system affordable. We also recognize that all Ontarians should have access to safe and secure housing. The GPO is thus committed to funding the maintenance and repair of already-existing social housing stock to help create and maintain safe communities and to help secure housing options for low-income and marginalized groups.

The GPO believes that if we make sound investments in our children's futures, they will be able to contribute great things to ours. For this reason, both education and childcare are prioritized in our current platform. By merging Ontario's separate Catholic and public school systems into one English and one French school board, we will save more than \$1 billion which can be reinvested into the classroom. Finally, by reallocating over the next four years the money that the Liberals spend on a 10% subsidy on electricity bills, which amounts to \$2.2 billion, we can address Ontario's high rate of childhood poverty. We advocate for using that \$2.2 billion to double the Ontario Child Benefit to improve the lives of children whose families live close to the poverty line.

Labour

4. 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?

GPO: The GPO believes that unions have played a positive role in the economy, particularly in enhancing safety in the workplace. We recognize 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.

5. 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?



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needs a new approach to ensure that all Ontarians receive a fair wage for their labour. The Green Party of Ontario supports the implementation of a Guaranteed Annual Income (GAI) in Ontario. A GAI would ensure that every person of working age in Ontario who files an income tax return would have an income that at least meets the poverty level. We recommend the establishment of a public commission to determine how Ontario can best implement a program to provide a guaranteed annual income for all citizens.

Health Care

6. 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?

GPO: The Green Party of Ontario aims for 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.

By refocusing the health care system to programs that promote health and work to prevent illness in the first place, we can improve the access to and quality of our health care system. We can create efficiencies, better manage costs, and improve outcomes by making front line health care more accessible. Given our foremost commitment to preventative health care, our plan does not need to rely on the use of public-private partnerships.

We are also of the mind that Local Health Integration Networks (LHINs) need to be reformed. We need local decision-making about health care that is transparent to the public. Our communities are unique and no one understands them better than their own members – the Green Party of Ontario knows this.

LHINs are not meeting their promise of community participation. Far too many decisions are being made behind closed doors without citizen and community participation. The Green Party insists on an immediate evaluation of LHINs. An evaluation was once promised but never started. Once that evaluation has been made, we can have a responsible debate about the future of LHINs and about what reforms are needed to make them work better. The Green Party believes that communities need to be a part of health care decisions.

7. 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?

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GPO: The GPO would also like to see more done to fund the hiring of additional doctors and nurses, and to pay for the improvement and outfitting of hospital facilities. Our plan to raise revenue without taxation is simple and effective. Quite a portion of revenue can be recovered if we, as Ontarians, put a stop to the fire sale of our natural resources. Right now, Ontario has the lowest mining royalty rates in Canada and we are the least efficient users of mining aggregates of any jurisdiction in the world. What is more outrageous is that the provincial government is selling off our natural resources at rock bottom prices when the province has a \$12.5 billion deficit. This must change, and a good first step is to follow the Drummond Report's recommendation to make polluters pay their fair share; the people of Ontario deserve their fair share of the province's resource wealth. Ontario could raise over \$1 billion per year by increasing royalties and levies for mining, aggregates and water taking. This will provide financial incentives for the efficient use of natural resources, it will relieve the taxpayers of some of the burden of dealing with pollution, it will restore and increase funding to several different and important areas of the public sector, and will spur innovation and job creation.

Education

8. 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?

GPO: We are a vocal proponent of increasing high-quality Early Childhood Education. The Green Party of Ontario supports universal, not-for-profit child care and full-day learning programs that stimulate creativity and growth, and help to alleviate poverty. To increase the number of child care spaces available, the GPO will increase the number of existing child care programs upon balancing the budget.

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

GPO: Instead of decreasing funding and increasing class sizes due to educational budget constraints, the Green Party of Ontario (GPO) has started a frank conversation about whether Ontario can afford to fund four separate school boards. The GPO advocates a merge of Ontario's four school boards into one English and one French public school system. This will save an estimated \$1.3 billion per year that we can reinvest in the classroom to address children's needs including smaller class sizes, full day kindergarten, and support staff for students with special needs.



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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?

GPO: The GPO will index tuition increases to the rate of inflation for a short period of time. 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 advocate for additional funds to be directed into refundable tax credits for businesses to participate in apprenticeship, mentoring and co-op programs. The GPO also 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

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

GPO: Our party has been and will always remain dedicated to reducing climate change and protecting the environment. First, by establishing a dedicated transit fund that will allow us to realize the type of transit system we need, the GPO will deliver on its promise to alleviate Ontario's gridlock problem and to reduce the harmful carbon emissions that are the result of personal vehicle use. We will also encourage cycling instead of the use of personal vehicles by dedicating money and resources to improved cycling infrastructure and safety. We will allocate of 2% of the existing transportation infrastructure budget to a dedicated fund for municipalities to invest in infrastructure to make roads safer for pedestrians, cyclists, and wheeled mobility users. Investing in safe cycling infrastructure will result in big returns for Ontario since cycling combats gridlock, reduces carbon omissions, and supports health.

The GPO is also very concerned about Ontario's prime farmland and clean drinking water. Both are essential to our lives, our health, and our happiness. We have to commit to protecting these vital resources for future generations. Ontario is losing 365 acres of farmland a day, an area the size of Toronto every year. We can never replace it, and only 0.5% of Ontario's land is prime farmland in the first place. The GPO supports the introduction of legislation to permanently protect Ontario's Class 1 farmland and source-water regions. We will make sure that the land and water that sustains us now is preserved for future generations. Best of all, protecting prime farmland from development does not cost Ontario's taxpayers anything. The benefits, on the other hand, are priceless.

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12. 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?

GPO: We support the creation of a dedicated fund for public transit. The GPO will ensure that Ontario this dedicated transit fund - one that cannot be wasted on other pursuits - to build new transit and support the operation of existing transit. The GPO will work to implement dedicated revenue tools that are fair and progressive, such as land value capture, congestion charges, gas taxes and parking fees, to raise \$3 billion a year to build and operate transit in communities across Ontario.

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