

May 23, 2022

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RE: Questionnaire for 2022 Ontario Election

Dear Kelly,

Thank you for sending us your organization's questionnaire. We appreciate the opportunity to speak on these issues that matter to Ontarians. I am happy to provide you with a response on behalf of the party.

Sincerely,

Madeleine Crist
Office Manager
Green Party of Ontario

Questionnaire for 2022 Ontario Election - Confederation of Canadian Unions

1. Statistics Canada reports that unionized workers enjoy higher wages than non-unionized workers in the same line of work, as well as stronger pensions, superior health and safety standards, 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?

Ontario Greens believe that unions play a positive role in our economy, and are important in protecting the rights and wages of workers in the province. We will immediately repeal Bill 124 and the problematic sections of Bill 106 and allow all healthcare workers to bargain collectively for fair wages.

Policies we would implement include:

- Restoring and improving workers' rights to collective bargaining
- Implement the Pay Transparency Act.
- Implementing a "Gig Workers' Bill of Rights" to protect gig workers and ensure fair pay and treatment
- Ensuring consistent and fair labour standards and working conditions for all faculty, including contract faculty, in post-secondary education institutions.

2. With rising costs of food, rent and other basic goods, minimum wage and low-income workers in Ontario are struggling to make ends meet. What will your party do to create a living wage for all workers in the province?

Ontario Greens plan to phase in a Basic Income program, with the first step being to double ODSP and Ontario Works rates, and tie future increases to the rate of inflation. We would also:

- Eliminate any unnecessary red tape, reporting requirements, and other barriers typically faced by those needing financial support.
- Increase the floor of the minimum wage each year by \$1, starting at \$16 in 2022, with a top-up in cities where the cost of living is higher
- Provide all workers with full and equal access to employment rights and benefits programs like EI, CPP, and WSIB, as well as equal pay for equal work, regardless of employment status
- Increase the number of provincially-legislated paid sick days from three to ten, and provide small businesses financial support to fund the program
- Include meaningful consultation with people who have lived experience with poverty and existing social assistance programs in the design of all programs and services aimed at client-centred approaches for reducing poverty.

3. Premier Ford's Bill 124 interferes with the collective bargaining process, a key feature of a free and democratic society. It suppresses public sector wages at a time of high inflation and enormous increases in corporate profits not seen for decades. Will your party repeal Bill 124, and what actions will you take to protect free collective bargaining in the province of Ontario?"

Ontario Greens would immediately repeal Bill 124 and the problematic sections of Bill 106 to restore and improve workers' rights to collective bargaining fairly for wages and working conditions.

4. According to opinion polls, a large majority of Ontarians support greater funding for social services like health care, childcare and education. Will your party commit to ensuring these programs are properly funded? What will you do to end tax dodging by the super rich and create a more progressive taxation system where corporations and the very wealthy pay more in taxes.

We are committed to providing greater funding for social services, including health care, childcare, and education. Details of our plans include:

- Increasing mental health spending to 10% of Ontario's healthcare budget
- Providing a budget increase of 8% to the community mental health sector
- Increasing year-over-year hospital base operating funding to a minimum of 5%
- Increasing funding for both community and home care, as well as long-term care, and shifting public services back to non-profit providers
- Working with the federal government to ensure continued funding for access to high-quality, \$10-a-day childcare
- Establishing an review of Ontario's education funding formula so it adequately reflects students needs
- Immediately reverse the Ford government's cuts to OSAP by converting loans to grants for low and middle income students and eliminating interest charges on student debt.

- Index the base operating grant for Ontario's post-secondary institutions to the weighted national average, followed by inflationary increases year -to- year.

Ontario Greens believe that by providing services and support for everyone, we all benefit. Eventually, by lifting people out of poverty, and by creating a more equitable Ontario, we will see longer term savings in areas such as healthcare. To make sure that public services serve people effectively, we do need to pay for them. To do that, we have created a couple of revenue tools in which the wealthy and large corporations pay their fair share. These include:

- Increasing taxes for large corporations by 2% over 4 years
- Implementing a 1% climate surcharge on the top 10% of households
- Creating a one-time wealth tax on those with assets over \$10 million
- Implementing a multiple property speculation tax on people and corporations who own more than two house or condominium units in Ontario
- Introducing a vacant homes tax to make it harder to use vacant homes to park cash

5. The partial sell-off of Hydro One has been a boondoggle for Bay Street, Wall Street and the investment class, and a disaster for workers and consumers. Rates have skyrocketed for Ontarians, and the Ontario Financial Accountability Office stated that taxpayers would have saved \$1.8 billion if the government had taken on traditional debt to fund infrastructure projects instead of the sell-off. Will your party commit to fully returning Hydro One back to full public ownership and democratic control?

Ontario Greens spoke out loudly against the partial sale of Hydro One. We would investigate the best pathway toward full public ownership again. In addition, we will work to make Ontario net-zero by 2045 using a variety of tools, one of which is to have an ambitious retrofit plan in which we cut energy, while also helping people save money.

6. Average housing prices in Ontario have doubled in the last eight years alone, even though housing starts are higher than ever before. What actions will your party do to help eliminate speculation and real estate bubbles, and will you commit to building affordable public, social and cooperative housing that working people can afford?

To eliminate speculation and corruption in the housing market, we will:

- Implement a multiple property speculation tax on people and corporations who own more than two houses or condominium units
- Introduce a vacant homes tax to make it harder to use vacant homes to park cash
- Implement an anti-flipping tax on quick turnaround home sales
- Cracking down on money laundering and implementing a beneficial ownership registry to avoid the practice of nameless companies trading properties
- Work with all levels of government and housing experts to develop regulations to ease the financialization of our housing market

We are also committed to building affordable public, social and cooperative housing, including:

- Building 182,000 new permanently affordable community housing rental homes over the next 10 years, including 60,000 supportive homes
- Mandating inclusionary zoning and requiring a minimum of 20% affordable units in all housing projects above a certain size
- Renewing 260,000 community housing rental homes over the next decade
- Partnering with nonprofits, co-ops, and community land trusts to use public land for affordable rental housing and attainable home ownership options through low-cost long-term leases
- Deploying temporary and permanent supportive modular housing projects on provincially owned land

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?

Ontario Greens support a publicly funded, publicly delivered healthcare system and oppose any further privatization of care. We have committed to increasing funding in primary, long term and home care. We will begin the shift back to an entirely publicly funded, non-profit system immediately.

We plan to:

- Expand access to family health teams in communities across the province, and increase opportunities for physicians to join team-based models of care
- Increase options for primary care, such as community health centres and nurse-practitioner-led clinics
- Increase mental health spending to 10% of our health budget, and include mental health and addiction care under OHIP
- Partner with the federal government to implement a universal dental care program and a universal pharmacare program

8. During the past two years, the COVID pandemic has clearly illustrated the failure of private, for-profit long-term care. Years of corner-cutting, cheapened service delivery, staffing shortages, price gouging and other forms of corporate profiteering have turned long-term care into an utter disaster for seniors. Will your party commit to creating a publicly-administered, universal home care system in Ontario?

Yes. Ontario Greens understand the need to dramatically improve and invest in a better, highly integrated, non-profit, patient centred system within long term and home care. We have committed increased investments that will allow us to shift to an entirely nonprofit long term care system. We plan to better integrate long-term care, home care, and caregiver services within the healthcare system.

We will also:

- Repeal Bill 218, which shields long-term care owners and operators from liability for negligence.
- Reinstate annual comprehensive inspections of long-term care homes without advance notice, and ensure homes with infractions face the legislated consequences.

- Mandate that PSWs are paid a minimum of \$25 an hour and are paid for their travel time between visits
- Transfer regulatory oversight of retirement homes to the Ministry of Long-Term Care.
- Create a system of formal oversight for long-term care Medical Directors working with the Ontario College of Physicians and Surgeons and the Ontario Medical Association.
- Mandate a minimum of four hours of nursing and personal care per resident per day, including a minimum of 48 minutes of care provided by a registered nurse and 60 minutes provided by a registered practical nurse.
- Mandate continued professional development for staff on geriatric care, practices for caring for residents with dementia, and palliative and end-of-life care.

9. Drug prices continue to skyrocket for Ontarians, and more and more people have to choose between getting the medications they need and paying for necessities like food or rent. Will your party commit to creating a universal Pharmacare program in the province that will guarantee coverage for all Ontarians?

Yes, Ontario Greens will commit to partnering with the federal government to create a universal pharmacare program that will guarantee coverage for all Ontarians. As an interim measure, we will publicly fund take-home cancer and rare disease medications.

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

We plan to establish an independent review of Ontario's education funding formula so it adequately reflects student needs. We would ensure the updated formula includes funding for ESL grants, special education assistants, counselors, and other specific supports. We will repeal Bill 124 and ensure the right to fair, collective bargaining.

We also plan to:

- Strengthen in-person learning for schools, and oppose moves towards mandatory e-learning or hybrid learning models
- Cap grades 4 to 8 class sizes to 24 students at most and kindergarten at 26 students at most
- Work with school boards to ensure recruitment and retention practices for staff are transparent and reflect the diversity of Ontario's population. We would also ensure culturally relevant and responsive programming is included in mandatory staff training

11. The average university student debt in Ontario is \$26,480, and our province has one of the highest undergraduate tuition fees in the country, more than twice as high as Quebec. What will your party do to lower tuition fees and reduce student debt?

To address high tuition fees and rising student debt in Ontario, Ontario Greens would immediately reverse the Ford government's cuts to OSAP by converting loans to grants for low and middle income students. We would also eliminate interest charges on student debt. We would also ensure universities have sufficient funding by indexing the base operating grant for Ontario's post-secondary institutions to the weighted national average, followed by inflationary increases year -to- year.

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

Ontario Greens have laid out a truly comprehensive climate action plan in our “Roadmap to Net-zero”. In it, we commit to reaching net-zero carbon emissions in Ontario by 2045, through a number of actions including:

- Moving to renewable energy sources, and allow homes and businesses with renewables to earn credits toward energy use for excess energy production
- Electrifying everything practicable, including buildings, transport and industrial energy
- Increasing access to electric vehicles and charging infrastructure with cash incentives, and phase out the sale of new gas and diesel vehicles by 2030
- Improving the energy efficiency of buildings and retrofit existing homes and workplaces to net-zero

We plan to build a green economy in Ontario, by supporting and growing green businesses, preparing industries for the new climate economy, and creating and providing training for thousands of new jobs in green industries.

We also are focused on protecting our natural environment, by:

- Strengthen and uphold the Environmental Bill of Rights.
- Protecting at least 25% of lands and water by 2025 and 30% by 2030
- Safeguarding our source water, doubling the size of the Greenbelt to include a Bluebelt of protected water systems, and using water sustainably going forward
- Strengthening environmental oversight and public consultation, restoring the environmental assessment process, and restoring the Office of the Environmental Commissioner
- Reducing waste and setting high recycling and management standards for paper and plastic packaging
- Protecting biodiversity and strengthening animal welfare rules

We will pay for these through a climate surcharge on households in the 10% as well as by redirecting the annual \$7B taxpayer subsidy for electricity prices to support energy efficiency and climate action, maintaining energy subsidies only to those in need while also providing free access to upgrades that lower energy costs and consumption

13. 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?

We believe that making public transit affordable and accessible in Ontario is essential for achieving our low carbon future. We would:

- Prioritize public transit in all transportation planning decisions
- Immediately cut transit fares for at least three months to help people avoid the high cost of gas

- Restore the 50% provincial cost-share for transit operations
- Ensure all transportation decisions are evidence-based, made without political interference, and include consultation with planning experts
- Expanding all-day, 2-way GO service to leave every 15 minutes during peak periods and every 30 minutes off peak
- Establishing an intercity electric bus service to connect all communities across the province, including small and rural communities
- Fully funding the Northlander passenger rail service
- Exploring on-demand systems for public transit, especially in suburban and rural areas
- Supporting regional fare integration and seamless travel between transit systems