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Friday, February 19 Update

Dear Friend,

This week, my children returned to in-person school and I returned to the Ontario legislature. It's been a stressful and all-consuming time. All week we have been calling on Premier Ford to take heed of the spread of new COVID-19 variants, listen to public health and delay reopening the economy until it is safe to do so. Today, he listened. Toronto and Peel will remain under a stay-at-home order until at least March 8. [Here's information](#) on what this means for residents.

Read on for the latest information on what bills the Ontario government introduced this week, what we are advocating for to keep us safe, and the latest news in our community.

Please contact our office if you need help, have concerns or want to volunteer.

Yours,

Jessica Bell

Jessica Bell (MPP for University-Rosedale)

My newsletter for this week includes:

Queens Park

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NDP introduces 9 urgent bills, Ford government shuts them all down

This week was our first week back in the legislature and to help people make it through the pandemic and prevent a third wave, NDP MPPs brought forward nine motions and bills. The Ford government blocked every last proposal, which if passed would have:

1. Given workers [paid sick days](#), ensuring any Ontarian who has fallen ill can stay home without the fear of lost wages
2. Given long-term care homes enough staff to offer every resident [four-hours of hands on care per day](#).
3. Ensured care home residents have access to their [essential caregiver](#)
4. Put an [eviction ban in place during the pandemic](#), so no one who has lost income due to COVID-19 is at risk of losing their home
5. Created an equity strategy to put culturally-appropriate plans in place to [support disproportionately impacted communities](#)
6. [Made schools safer](#) with a class cap of 15, a comprehensive in-school testing program and more
7. [Raised the pay of all PSWs](#) by \$4 an hour
8. Put a [small business support plan](#) in place, including rent support
9. Created a [Seniors' Advocate](#) to monitor how the province manages elder care

I am angered the Ford government chose not to do everything necessary to keep us safe. I will continue to fight for legislation that supports those who need our help the most.



Join in the call for No COVID evictions

This week, I co-sponsored Bill 244, the [No COVID-19 Evictions Act, 2021](#) with NDP MPP Suze Morrison. If passed, the bill would prohibit residential evictions until after the pandemic ends.

[You can read the full press release here.](#)

Since the beginning of the pandemic, more than 14,000 people have been evicted from their homes in Ontario, and every day more and more families are at risk of losing their homes. It is not safe to force people to find shelter, apartment hunt, crash with friends or family, or survive on the street while the virus is spreading in our communities. It's putting people at risk of catching and spreading COVID-19.

While the Ontario government temporarily paused the enforcement of residential evictions during the state of emergency, that moratorium has now been lifted across most of Ontario. Toronto's eviction enforcement ban is expected to end once the stay-at-home order is lifted on March 8. The Landlord

We are organizing a day of action to encourage the Ontario government to keep the eviction moratorium. We invite you to join our phone bank as we call Premier Ford and the Minister of Housing Steve Clark on Thursday, February 25 from 5:30-7:30 pm. Please RSVP by sending an email to jbelleco@ndp.on.ca.

For more information and ways to get involved, [click here](#).

Now is the time to reform WSIB

This week, the Ford government introduced [Bill 238](#), which freezes WSIB premium rates paid by Ontario employers for 2021.

WSIB needs to be reformed, but this is not the reform that is needed right now.

Once Bill 238 moves into committee, we will have an opportunity to push for deeper reforms, including [presumptive coverage for all essential workers whose health is affected by COVID-19](#) as well as [a stop to deeming injured workers](#).

If you are interested in speaking at committee on Bill 238, please let us know. We will keep you updated on where and when to apply.

Ford government introduces an omnibus bill, changes to the justice system

This week, the Ford government introduced Bill 245, [Accelerating Access to Justice Act, 2021](#). Bill 245 is an omnibus bill that includes proposed changes to the province's courts, tribunals, estates law, family and child protection sectors.

As I begin a deeper reading of this piece of legislation, I welcome your thoughts and concerns. To share your feedback, please email jbelleco@ndp.on.ca.

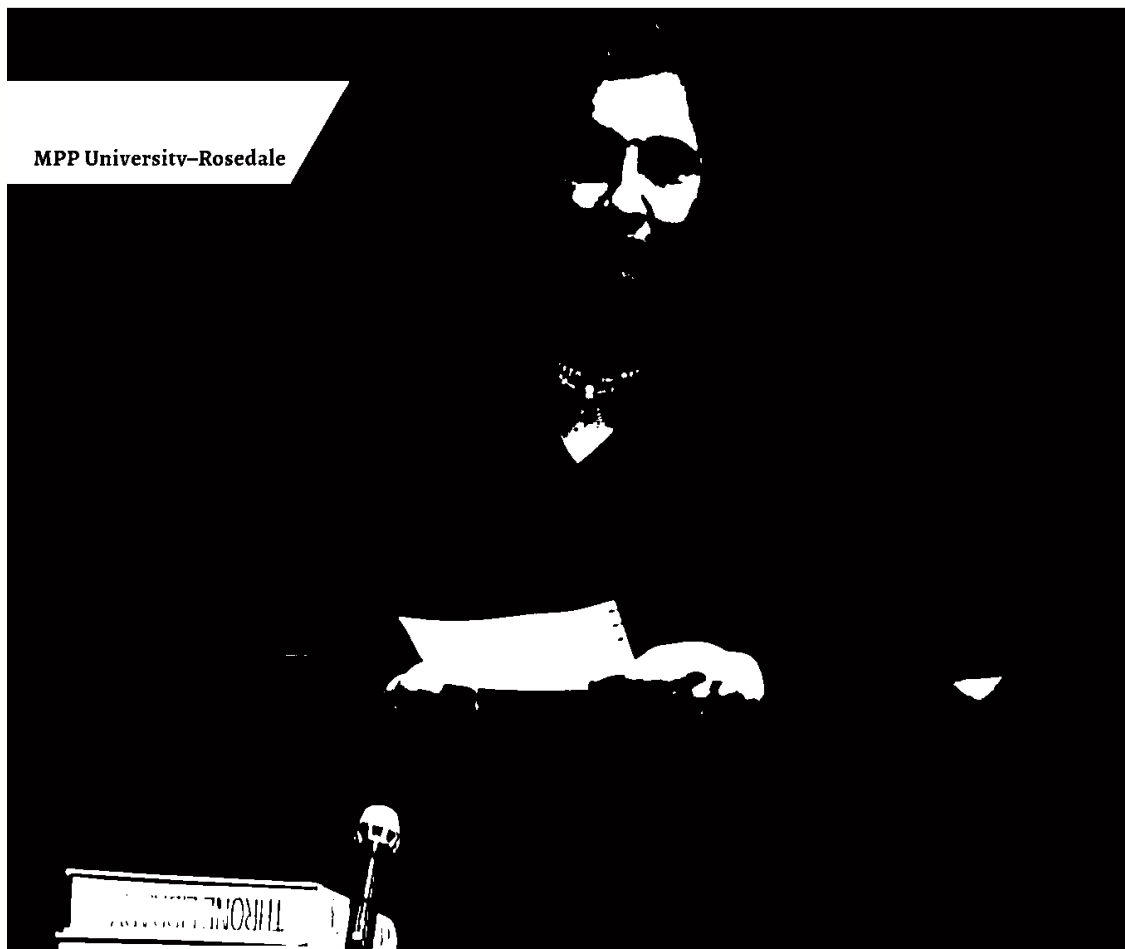
Doug Ford's highway 413 threatens the Greenbelt

Despite a [government-appointed expert panel](#) concluding the province should not build highway 413 because it would do almost nothing to improve commute times while causing irreversible environmental damage, the Ontario

The proposed highway would move from Milton to Vaughan through farms, forests, and a portion of the Greenbelt, destroying forests and prime farmland along the way.

This is not the first time Doug Ford has threatened the integrity of the Greenbelt. In 2018, Ford assured developers he would open the Greenbelt for development. In 2019 he tried again through Bill 66, a massive deregulation bill burying incentives for developers to pave over the Greenbelt. Ford tried again in December 2020, when he stripped power from Conservation Authorities, gutting environmental protections and forcing nearly the entire Greenbelt Council to resign in protest.

Across the province, Ontarians are standing up for a clean environment, green space, local agriculture and food, and nature for future generations to enjoy. It's time for a climate-focused government committed to investing in green transit solutions. To send a letter to Premier Ford opposing highway 413, [click here](#).



Human rights activist Karima Mehrab remembered

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day after she was reported missing. Karima was a University of Toronto student.

Before her death, Karima was a prominent voice in the Balochi independence movement. After facing terrorism charges and death threats for her activist work in Pakistan, Karima was granted political asylum in Canada.

Amongst a rise in threats and attacks against Balochi activists abroad, human rights groups are calling for a full and independent investigation into her death.

Thank you to University-Rosedale residents of the Balochi community for bringing this tragedy to my attention. We must remember Karima's work and honour her life.

[Click here to learn more.](#)



Wishing everyone a happy Lunar New Year

For 15 days beginning February 12, many in University-Rosedale are celebrating the Lunar New Year. This year marks the year of the Ox. Those born in the Year of the Ox are said to be natural leaders who are bright, patient, and cheerful.

I wish everyone celebrating virtually and with their household, a safe and happy new year.

Watch my [translated video message here](#).



It's official! I'm your NDP candidate for the 2022 provincial election

Last week, I was nominated by the University-Rosedale NDP riding association as the official candidate for the 2022 provincial election.

I want to thank all of you for your support, generosity, kindness, and activism. Everything I do as an elected official, from passing laws to winning campaigns, is achieved through the work I do with the residents of University-Rosedale and countless Torontonians. Social change always involves a community of people, and I'm proud to be a part of our movement.

I will continue my fight for a true response to COVID-19 led by public health, excellent public services, a Green New Deal bold enough to match the crisis of climate change, affordable housing, and an economy that is truly fair, which means raising the minimum wage and raising taxes on the wealthy and large corporations.

We know what laws we need to improve our city. We just need the political will. That's our job.

The BIA does not condone the anti-lockdown or anti-mask protests that have been affecting our residents, our businesses and overall community.

We will not tolerate any destruction to private property, danger to our businesses, harassment or racism - but even more so especially during a time where we need our visitors to feel safe and comfortable shopping in our neighbourhood during this pandemic.



Kensington Market BIA condemns unsafe protests

Kensington Market has been targeted by weekly anti-lockdown and anti-mask protests. The Kensington Market business community does not support these protests and is concerned about safety in the community, as am I.

If you live, work or shop for essential goods in Kensington Market and are made to feel unsafe by protesters, or witness aggressive behaviour please call 911. There are police on site who will be notified.

Throughout the pandemic, Kensington Market businesses have worked hard to serve the community by offering curbside pick-up, online deliveries, take-out and essential goods. Please continue to support Kensington Market and your neighbourhood businesses safely.

Toronto City Council approves 2021 budget

This week City Council met to approve its [2021 Budget](#). This budget was an opportunity to shift what we prioritize for years to come - like action on housing, real public safety, and climate change, and to not go back to the status quo that has left so many residents, our neighbours, behind. The City's budget is not just an exercise of balancing numbers - it is about making real, tangible changes that affect people's lives. While there is still so much work to do, some positive highlights include:

- a report on transferring responsibility for crisis response, traffic management and parking enforcement away from the police and to create alternative public safety services run by the City, in addition to the ongoing study to remove 911 operations from the police
- application of a strong climate lens on all future budget decisions
- taking all measures needed to provide emergency housing to house everyone who is sleeping outdoors this winter, and to give City staff the authority and resources needed to fulfil this direction and escalate the pressure on the province to fund their share of the desperately needed new supportive housing.

For more information on the 2021 budget, you can read [Mike Layton's latest newsletter](#) or visit the [City's website here](#).

Upcoming workshop on resisting renovictions hosted by ACORN

Ontario has an affordable housing crisis and many renters are suffering extreme stress and hardship because of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The stress of fighting a no-fault eviction forces many tenants out of their homes without a fair fight or fair compensation. Once evicted, renters are often pushed out of their communities because of sky-high rents. This puts tenants at risk of dislocation, housing unaffordability, mental health stress, and homelessness.

On **Monday, February 22 at 6 pm** ACORN is hosting a free virtual resist renovictions workshop. The workshop will cover details around renovictions, what to look out for, how tenants can protect themselves, and how to get organized in their buildings to fight back against them. There will be time for questions and discussion afterward.

Those who are interested will need to register beforehand using this link: bit.ly/ResistRenovictionsWorkshop or by emailing

[Click here to learn more.](#)

To demand Doug Ford pass legislation protecting tenants from illegal evictions, [click here.](#)



3 STEPS FOR SELF-PROTECTION

We all have a role to play to reduce COVID-19 spread & keep our city safer:



[TORONTO.CA/COVID19](https://toronto.ca/covid19)

 **TORONTO** Public Health

Now is the time to follow public health guidelines

As COVID-19 cases climb in Ontario, please consider these reminders from Toronto Public Health to protect yourself and others from COVID-19.

The best way to prevent infection is to avoid being exposed:

- Limit non-essential trips out of your home and follow [travel advice](#)

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- wear a mask or face covering in indoor public spaces and when you can't
keep physical distance
- Clean your hands often. Use soap and water or an alcohol-based (70-90 per cent) hand sanitizer
- Avoid touching your face with unwashed hands
- Cover your cough or sneeze with your elbow or a tissue. Immediately throw the tissue in the garbage and wash your hands.
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces
- Avoid close contact with people who are sick
- Stay home if you are feeling unwell

Download the [COVID Alert app](#) so you can be notified directly if you have been in close contact with someone who was contagious with COVID-19. I have downloaded the app and I encourage you to do the same.

**Protect your
community.
Download the
COVID Alert app.**



Health Santé
Canada Canada

Canada

Note that this email and all previous COVID-19 updates are available at: www.jessicabellmpp.ca/coronavirus

As always, if you require urgent assistance from my office, please contact my team at 416-535-7206 or email us at jbelle-co@ndp.on.ca



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