

IT'S ABOUT CHANGE. IT'S ABOUT YOU.

A New Democrat Vision for Ontario



INTRODUCTION

IT'S ABOUT CHANGE. IT'S ABOUT YOU.

Those six words go to the heart of the New Democratic Party's vision for a better Ontario. And this document sets out that vision, with ideas built on the hard work New Democrats have been doing across Ontario. It draws on our values, and on NDP policy resolutions passed by members from every part of the province. We hope you'll see our party's legacy from Tommy Douglas to J.S. Woodsworth to Agnes Macphail to Jack Layton reflected here: modern priorities that spring from time-honoured principles.

Over the past year, Provincial Council has done exciting policy work and our regional councils have provided unique and valuable insights. We're building on legislation and motions put forward by our caucus. We've heard from labour leaders and activists, business and community leaders and NGOs. And most importantly we've heard the concerns that people face in their everyday lives.

That's what you'll see reflected in this document. It isn't a comprehensive platform; you won't see everything we have stood for and will fight for described here in detail. Instead, this document sets out key priorities and outlines a high-level vision for a better Ontario. And it launches the conversation about how we get there.

Between now and the election in June 2018, we will build on this vision. We will show people how an NDP government will make life in Ontario better for them and for the next generation of Ontarians.

We hope you'll take the time to look at it and share it with your friends and family. Let us know what you think. And we hope you'll help us deliver the real, bold and positive change that Ontario so badly needs.

This vision is about change. It's about you.



A MESSAGE FROM ANDREA

We know Ontario is a great place to live: from our cities, towns and rural communities to our lakes, forests and farmland.

But for me, what makes our province special – what truly makes us great – is our people.

Meeting so many different people in different parts of Ontario is what I love most about the work I do. And no matter where I am, or who I'm talking to, people want the same things: to take care of their families and friends; to keep them healthy, safe and close; and to do whatever is needed so people can have a bright future.

But it's getting harder and harder for them to do that. More and more, the people I talk with are stressed and anxious for the future. They worry their kids won't have the opportunities that they had – and they're right to worry.

Costs are up, wages for too many are down and the services we count on, like health care, are squeezed. People across the province feel that even though they're doing everything right, they still aren't getting ahead.

A few have too much. And too many have too little.

We've gotten here because for too long we've had Liberal and Conservative governments that put insiders and corporate interests at the front of the line, leaving the rest of us to fend for ourselves.

But it doesn't have to be this way. We can change the way government works in Ontario. We can have a government that puts people at the heart of every decision and gives everyone an equal chance to build a great life.

And the only government that will do that is a New Democrat government.

Together we can build a future for Ontario...

- where everyone has the opportunity to get a job that supports a family and lets them build a good life – no matter where they live
- where families that hit a rough patch can count on government to help them get back on their feet
- where neighbourhood schools guarantee our children a world-class education that gives them what they need to succeed and child care is affordable and available
- where young people can get a good post-secondary education without a massive debt holding them back from starting their lives

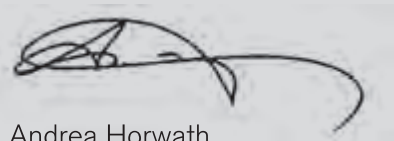
- where racism and homophobia have no place
- where seniors get the security, care and dignity they deserve
- where public health care is there when and where we need it
- where we lead the fight on climate change and future generations can count on clean air and water and wild, natural spaces
- where Indigenous people are finally treated as respected partners and equals, and receive the basic human rights and opportunities they have been shamefully denied for so long.

We have a vision for a fairer, more equal Ontario. It's a vision that will secure a real future here for the next generation.

It's a vision that champions our public services, because they're about equality and security for everyone.

It's a vision that puts people – that puts you – front and centre.

**I know we can do better here in Ontario.
And it starts with electing a New
Democrat government in 2018.**



Andrea Horwath
Leader, Ontario's New Democrats.



Table of Contents:

Introduction	1
A message from Andrea.....	2
A vibrant, modern economy that works for all of us.....	5
Public health care when and where we need it.....	13
More affordable, livable cities and towns	20
Improving social services and taking real actions to end poverty	26
Lifelong learning that’s accessible and affordable	28
Leaving the next generation a cleaner, greener province	32
Creating a more equitable province where diversity is celebrated and rights are respected.....	34
More transparent, accountable government at every level.....	38



A vibrant, modern economy that works for all of us

Our economy is changing more and more quickly. Global uncertainty, disruptive technologies, wildly fluctuating commodity prices, climate change and political turmoil in the U.S. further reinforce the need for Ontario's economy to be flexible and forward-thinking. We must also ensure that our infrastructure and economy are resilient in the face of a changing climate, and that we plan in a way that minimizes our impact on the environment.

Most important, we must ensure that our economy works for people and that everyone is able to share in our province's prosperity.

While the new economy has created opportunities for some people, for many others it feels like a race to the bottom. Good jobs have disappeared. Wages have stalled or fallen and insecure work is becoming the new normal. Women are still waiting for true pay equity. And millions of people are facing huge costs for prescription drugs, dental care, vision care and mental health services because so few jobs come with benefits.

While Ontario's knowledge sector is growing, it is not replacing the jobs that have disappeared in manufacturing. Regional economies are facing challenges as they try to remain globally competitive. More and more, people are having to leave their communities in search of a good-paying job. Young people, women, racialized youth, recent immigrants, people with disabilities and Indigenous people in Ontario face stubbornly difficult entry into the job market, and when they do enter the job market – those jobs are too often unpredictable, underpaid and unstable.

The reality in Ontario today is that wages are stagnant and the cost of living is up. Ontarians are working harder, but not getting ahead. There's a growing sense that our province is falling behind, that we're not the prosperous economic giant we used to be. Liberal and Conservative short-sighted policies, lack of planning, corporate tax breaks, privatization and attacks on public services have sped along a race to the bottom and created an economy that isn't working for Ontario families.

We can change the way things work in Ontario. We can have a good government that works for people, that doesn't just stand by and watch. We can have a government that is proactive, plans for the future, makes sure that economic changes don't leave people behind, and that everyone benefits from prosperity.



And we can have a government that listens to all regions of our province, including northern and rural Ontario. We can't lose sight of our regional strengths that built Ontario, such as mining, forestry and agriculture. Our vision of regional growth also ensures there is a place for everything from innovation to arts and culture. Our vision for Ontario is where economic development works for everyone, where small towns can thrive, and cities are vibrant and livable.

A New Democrat government will transition Ontario's economy to one that is modern, prosperous, environmentally sustainable and works for all Ontarians by:

Better work

RAISING MINIMUM WAGE TO \$15

Too many people are earning a wage they can't live on – 1.7 million Ontarians earn the minimum wage or close to it. And we know that more often than not those receiving the least are those who have the most obstacles to overcome: women, racialized Ontarians, Indigenous workers, new immigrants, people with disabilities, single parents and young workers.

A majority of Ontarians want to see the minimum wage in Ontario raised to \$15. Studies show that increases to the minimum wage help economies to grow by putting money back in the pockets of our families and neighbours. Better wages mean there's more to spend in our communities. Better wages also mean less turnover and more stability in workplaces.

A New Democrat government will raise the minimum wage to \$15.

GUARANTEEING SICK DAYS FOR ALL WORKERS

Too many workers in Ontario face the choice of staying home and taking care of themselves or a family member when they're sick, or losing a day's wages, or worse, their job. The result is that people go to work sick. Instead of getting better, they stay sick longer, their colleagues get sick and everyone is less productive.

In a New Democrat Ontario, no one will be penalized for being sick.

GUARANTEEING HOURS AND PREDICTABLE SCHEDULES

Work has become increasingly unstable in Ontario. People are often expected to be readily available for work without any guarantee of hours or predictable schedule. That makes it very difficult to live a well-rounded life and make a living.

We will guarantee a fair minimum number of paid hours per shift and require that schedules are posted with enough notice that Ontarians can feel confident to plan their busy lives.

FAIRNESS FOR TEMP WORKERS

Workers hired through a temp agency are often paid up to 33% less than the permanent employees sitting at the desk next to them doing the same job, while the agencies make double what the agency worker receives. It's unfair and it makes it cheaper for companies to hire temp workers than to provide good, secure jobs.

New Democrats will ensure that any workers hired through a temp agency receive the same wage, same protections and the same benefits as those working beside them. And after a standard probation period, anyone hired through an agency will be presumed to be an

employee of the client company. An NDP government will commit to not hiring government workers through temp agencies.

PROTECTING INDEPENDENT WORKERS

More and more Ontarians are working outside of a traditional employer/employee relationship. Some people are misclassified as contractors, when they are, for all intents and purposes, employees. These workers and many others who cobble a living together doing a variety of different kinds of work are people who want full-time, stable employment but can't find it. Others choose to be freelancers, contract workers or solopreneurs because of the nature of their profession or for the flexibility provided by working this way.

The challenge is that these jobs are increasingly without security, benefits or protections.

New Democrats believe that just because the nature of work is changing, the rewards of

work shouldn't be sacrificed. Wherever and however people work, they deserve security, benefits, workplace protections and fair pay.

A New Democrat government will distinguish between people who want to work independently and those who want permanent status but are pushed into contract work. We'll ensure that people who are employees will be treated as such with access to equal pay, benefits and protections. And that those who choose to be independent workers have access to benefits, vacation and sick pay, pensions, and parental leave and are covered by employment standards and safety laws.

SUPPORTING THE RIGHT TO JOIN AND BELONG TO A UNION

Membership in a union is a ticket into the middle class. It gives people the ability to bargain for better pay, better schedules, benefits and job stability – all things that are sadly lacking in too many workplaces in Ontario.



A New Democrat government won't stand by while strikes last indefinitely and we'll ensure all of Ontario's labour laws are fair and put workers first.

We will protect workers by putting an end to 'contract flipping' where private contracts for services are turned over to the lowest bidders every couple of years, resulting in workers getting laid off only to be rehired again with lower wages and fewer benefits.

A modern, broader-based bargaining structure can give more workers meaningful access to collective representation, who may not be able to access it under existing rules, and can also address the needs of existing unionized workers.

KEEPING WORKERS SAFE

We all have a responsibility to make sure that that every workday ends safely. Tragically, in Ontario every year, hundreds of people are killed on the job, thousands are injured and countless more people have to deal with

complications due to work-related environmental illnesses and trauma. There are too many injuries and deaths in Ontario workplaces. Young workers are especially vulnerable. Many just beginning their working lives are starting it with a tragedy that will haunt them for the rest of their lives.

Liberal and Conservative governments have allowed too many exemptions to employment standards and safety laws. That has to stop. A New Democrat government will put resources back into proactive enforcement of health and safety standards for Ontario's workplaces. And we'll enforce the rules and increase the number of jobs covered under the Employment Standards and worker safety laws.

ESTABLISHING CARD CHECK CERTIFICATION AND INTRODUCING FIRST-CONTRACT ARBITRATION

As workplaces change and work becomes more unpredictable, we need to make sure workers are empowered to organize and unionize.



A New Democratic government will do just that by making sure that any workplace can unionize when 55% of workers sign a card stating they want to join a union. This was the standard for 45 years until the last Conservative government eliminated it.

We will also introduce first-contract arbitration to make it easier to avoid the delays and conflicts that too frequently develop while negotiating a first contract, something too often used to try and get rid of a union.

Creating jobs

ENCOURAGING INNOVATION CLUSTERS

Around the globe, innovation is dominated by successful ‘clusters’ where industries are concentrated in geographic areas: high-tech in Silicon Valley, fashion in Northern Italy, gaming in Las Vegas. We see similar clusters in Ontario including financial services in Toronto, automotive and manufacturing in the south west, programming and IT in Kitchener-Waterloo, telecom in Ottawa and mining innovation in Sudbury. But we can do more.

New Democrats will support our leading clusters and build more in regions and sectors with untapped potential by bringing together small- and medium-sized businesses, large anchor organizations, spin-offs and startups, universities, colleges and research centres, investors and labour. They will be based on public leadership and built on private-sector investment, capacity, knowledge and innovation.

HELPING SMALL BUSINESS BY OVERHAULING ONTARIO’S BUSINESS SUPPORT PROGRAMS

According to the Ontario Chamber of Commerce, Ontario businesses see the province as an increasingly risky place for enterprise. New and small businesses are not growing, and our

world-leading startups face serious challenges in becoming internationally competitive while remaining in Ontario.

Ontario’s Auditor General has criticized the Liberal government’s business support programs for being uncoordinated and not meeting their stated objectives. Business support programs under both Liberal and Conservative governments have been focused on large businesses at the expense of small businesses and entrepreneurs. The current programs are too complex for enterprises without large resources to navigate. It’s time to bring balance to Ontario’s business support programs.

We’ll make sure small businesses have access to the support they need to flourish by making support programs accessible, simplified and transparent.

SUPPORTING SMALL BUSINESS WITH GOVERNMENT PROCUREMENT

Governments should be reinvesting tax dollars back into Ontario communities by supporting made-in-Ontario products when possible.

A New Democrat government will support Ontario jobs by engaging in strategic government procurement from small and medium-sized businesses using community benefit agreements.

INVESTING IN INFRASTRUCTURE

Infrastructure provides the foundation for our economy, our services and our ability to get around in our daily lives. From roads and bridges, to hospitals and affordable housing, investing in building and maintaining provincial infrastructure is a critical responsibility of a good government.

Successive Ontario governments have failed to adequately invest in the maintenance and expansion of the province’s infrastructure. Years of under-investment and neglect has

created an infrastructure deficit in Ontario worth tens of billions. Commutes are long and stressful, schools are falling apart and bridges are in disrepair.

A New Democrat government will get Ontario moving again with better transit and safer roads and bridges. And we will make sure that communities have safe, green, community schools and hospitals to provide the services they count on.

We'll make sure the federal government pays its fair share for infrastructure projects. And we'll put an end to wasteful and costly P3s, ensuring that public infrastructure dollars go towards funding and maintaining public assets, not private profits.

Another critical part of modern infrastructure is ensuring that everyone has access to broadband internet services no matter where they live. We will increase access to broadband particularly in rural and northern areas.

ATTRACTING MORE IMMIGRANTS AND MAKING IT EASIER FOR THEM TO BUILD A GOOD LIFE HERE

Immigration is pivotal to the economic, cultural and social fabric of Ontario. With the rise of anti-immigration sentiment in several of the world's largest economies, Ontario can become the best place for immigrants to build a future. And the continued tragic global refugee crisis means it is even more important that Ontario takes our humanitarian responsibilities seriously. Now more than ever, we must get immigration right.

Our priority is ensuring that new immigrants have the opportunity to succeed and build a life here. Language and cultural barriers can make it difficult to find meaningful employment and many employers undervalue international experience. The process for credential recognition can be long, arduous and expensive.

A New Democrat government will make sure that the Ontario Immigrant Nominee Program is responsive to the labour market and we'll provide the best environment in the country for immigrants to settle, contribute and prosper.

We'll partner with non-profit organizations, settlement service providers, employers and municipalities to create job opportunities and settlement services in rural, remote and northern communities to address the unique challenges these communities face in attracting and retaining immigrants.

We will work with professional associations and the federal government to streamline the process for foreign credential recognition so that highly-educated immigrants can find meaningful employment in their areas of expertise.

And we'll take steps to make sure that rights and dignity are respected by calling on the federal government to stop using provincial jails to detain immigrants.

We will declare Ontario a Sanctuary Province.

SUPPORTING OUR AUTO AND MANUFACTURING INDUSTRIES

A strong, coordinated and comprehensive strategy will not only secure current good-paying auto and manufacturing jobs in Ontario but with a bold and proactive plan, we can increase the number of auto jobs in Ontario.

Instead of ignoring this sector like the Liberals have, New Democrats will pursue an aggressive auto and manufacturing strategy based on the strength and education of our workforce. We'll make Ontario a good place to invest by bringing auto parts into an auto strategy and working to ensure Ontario's auto and manufacturing industries are well-positioned as consumer needs change. Our vision is to make

our province a leader in the development and manufacturing of driverless technology, hybrid and electric vehicles and ensure Ontario consumers can buy made-in-Ontario vehicles that meet the highest standards.

We will make sure skills gaps are addressed and workers have the opportunity to train and upgrade to ensure they can benefit from changes in the industry. And we'll work with the Canadian Automotive Partnership Council and Ontario's new Chief Investment Officer to centralize information and resources and aggressively work to bring and retain automotive and manufacturing investment to Ontario.

We'll also participate in renegotiation of trade deals to ensure that Ontario workers benefit and that no further harm is done to this important industry and the families that rely on it.

SUPPORTING OUR AGRICULTURAL INDUSTRIES

Agriculture is an essential part of Ontario's identity; approximately 70,000 people work in Ontario's agriculture sector producing a year-round supply of meat, egg, dairy, fruit, vegetable and field crops. A strong agricultural sector needs strong rural communities and that means making sure farm families have access to good health care, schools and roads.

We'll work with farmers to create an Ontario Food Strategy that ensures Ontarians can buy healthy, locally sourced food supporting jobs, not only on farms, but in food processing, transportation, biofuels, service and retail. The strategy will include a program to help young farm families get established in agriculture through things like mentorship, third party financial advice and a loan guarantee component for first-time farmers. And we'll protect farmland against development and commercial buying of farmland solely for investment purposes.



GETTING MOVING ON THE RING OF FIRE

It's time for Ontario to get moving on the Ring of Fire. Northern communities have been told by Conservative and Liberal governments that new jobs are just around the corner. For years, they've promised they would take action, but nothing has happened. This has serious consequences and investment is leaving Ontario.

It's estimated that the chromite reserves in the Ring of Fire are worth over \$60 billion and thousands of jobs for people across Ontario's north. A New Democrat government will work with First Nations, mining and exploration companies, refiners and northerners to get the project moving.

People have waited long enough. It's time to get to work.

SUPPORTING OUR MEDIA AND CULTURAL INDUSTRIES

Cultural industries are a critical part of our province's fabric. They allow us to share our stories and celebrate the diverse cultures that make Ontario the great province that it is and they are also an important economic engine. Ontario is home to the third-largest film and TV production centre in North America, globally-recognized musicians, authors and digital media producers. Jobs in arts and culture are highly-skilled, educated and innovative.

A New Democrat government will work with the screen-based industry, responsible for tens of thousands of jobs and bringing in over one billion dollars to the province in 2015, to continue to grow and expand its geographic reach in the province. We will ensure Ontario has industry-competitive tax credits for film and television production and we'll work with municipalities to streamline zoning opportunities for innovative, state-of-the-art production spaces.



We'll also aim to expand the industry's reach by working with the skilled trades, producers and talent to bring productions and create jobs in northern Ontario, with a focus on career skills development with First Nations.

We'll make sure the Ontario Council for the Arts and the Ontario Media Development Corporation have the resources needed to strengthen and grow our cultural sector. We will apply fair and predictable funding formulas, done in consultation with the arts and culture sectors, while ensuring the viability of festivals and other events in large and small communities across Ontario.

A New Democrat government will also expand protections under the Employment Standards Act, and address the gaps in benefits that affect many self-employed people in cultural industries.

Public health care when and where we need it

Universal access to public health care is one of the proudest achievements of New Democrats and all Canadians. But for years, we've seen Liberal and Conservative governments chipping away at Medicare and the promise that public health care holds.

As a result, it's getting harder to access good health care in Ontario. Deep cuts to hospitals have led to thousands of layoffs of frontline health care workers. And the Liberals have broken trust with our doctors, nurses and health care workers.

In everything we do, New Democrats are guided by the vision and principles of the *Canada Health Act*. We will protect universal access to public, not-for-profit health care. We believe the federal government must do more to promote better health care in Canada. In addition to establishing a universal national pharmacare program, the federal government needs to reassert the principles of national, public health care and put an end to creeping privatization. This is especially true in home care and long-term care.

We will stop the privatization of health care services and work to restore public hospital services that have been privatized by Liberals and Conservatives. And we will ban profit-driven medical tourism in Ontario's hospitals.

Our health isn't just about health care. New Democrats recognize that the health of Ontarians is profoundly influenced by prevention and people's access to decent work and income, good, healthy food, clean and safe housing and a wide range of social and community supports. That's why all of our commitments – from increasing the minimum wage to \$15 and improving work, to investing in affordable housing, transit, child care and recreation – are part of our vision for a healthier Ontario.

We will promote health equity and make sure that all government policies support a healthier future for Ontarians.

A New Democrat government will make sure quality health care is available to every Ontarian when and where they need it by:

IMPROVING ACCESS TO PRESCRIPTION DRUGS

National pharmacare is the unfinished business of building Medicare in Canada. Today, too many Ontarians, and Canadians, do not have public or private drug coverage and are



forced to pay hundreds of dollars out-of-pocket for the prescription drugs they need. And there are those for whom medications are out-of-reach, and go without the prescriptions they need.

As New Democrats, we know that this has to change. Ontario can and must be a leader.

ENDING DECADES OF CUTS AND PRIVATIZATION IN HEALTH CARE

Medicare is Canada's great hope and our unfulfilled promise. Now is the time for Ontario to lead the country forward with real steps that strengthen and expand public health care. Our public health care system must meet the constantly changing needs of Ontarians. People must get the right care, when they need it and as close to home as possible, including in rural and Northern Ontario. As our population grows and ages, health care services must be able to meet new demands, adopt innovative practices, educate and train health care professionals and respond quickly

and effectively to changing needs in our communities.

New Democrats will place a moratorium on any further layoffs of nurses and frontline health care workers, professionals, and providers until we have a comprehensive health human resources plan in place. We will stop the cuts in our hospitals and ensure that hospital funding – at a minimum – keeps up with inflation, population growth, and the unique health needs of the population they serve. For example recognizing that a hospital may serve a population with higher than normal rates of diabetes, or a larger-than-average senior population.

SUPPORTING HEALTH CARE WORKERS AND PROFESSIONALS

Ontario's health care workers and professionals devote their lives to providing great care to people. And our entire health care system suffers when they are stretched too thin and denied the supports they need.



New Democrats will take decisive action to support health care workers. We'll work collaboratively with all health care professionals to deliver better care. And we'll restore respect for everyone who works in health care.

A New Democrat government will call for an immediate moratorium on any further cuts to nurses and health care workers until a comprehensive staffing and HR framework is established. We'll work collaboratively with all health care professionals to help them practice to their full scope and serve Ontarians to the very best of their abilities. By freeing health care professionals to do their jobs, patients will experience better, faster and more convenient care.

We will give doctors access to binding arbitration, like those in many other provinces already have.

We will work with frontline workers to reduce violence and address safety risks in all health care settings and we'll correct the wrongs of the Liberal government. We will amend legislation to extend presumptive coverage for post-traumatic stress disorder to nurses and health care workers who often work as first responders in our emergency departments and other health care settings.

PROVIDING THE BEST HOME CARE IN CANADA

New Democrats are driven to make Ontario's home care the best in the entire country. We want to eliminate wait lists, guarantee access to the services that people need and support good jobs so that home care workers can provide great care. Delivering the best home care in Canada is our vision and our commitment to the people of Ontario.

Today, Ontario's home care system is broken. Too many people are waiting too long without the care and support they need, putting their safety at risk. Family caregivers are living with stress and burnout because they're not getting the support they need to make sure their loved ones are cared for. Seniors are left worrying, waiting and wondering when their home care worker will arrive or whether they'll have the same worker they had last time. And while home care workers are doing their best, many are working in low-paying and insecure jobs that make it hard to provide great care.

The Liberal and Conservatives' broken model is in part based on contracting service delivery to for-profit providers. Too much public funding spent on home care goes directly to private companies' profits and administrative costs, and not to patient care.

New Democrats will work to take the profit out of care and invest it in eliminating wait lists, guaranteeing access to the services people need within five days, and increasing the number of hands-on care hours people receive. We will also support good paying jobs with more reliable schedules so that home care workers can provide great, consistent care.

INVESTING IN QUALITY LONG-TERM CARE

Our aging parents and grandparents deserve to live in safety, comfort and dignity. Right now, Ontario is letting them down.

After decades of Liberal and Conservative neglect, long-term care is at a breaking point. Residents are older and have more complex needs that are not always being met. Over 25,000 seniors are stuck on wait lists, putting more pressure on hospitals. And our system is already having trouble providing the support required to care for the increasing number of patients suffering from Alzheimer's and dementia.

We have to take concrete steps to improve care and restore families' trust that loved ones will be protected every minute of every day.

We will work to reduce wait lists, increase the hours of hands-on care, and take action to ensure that couples needing long-term care are never separated against their will and that long-term care homes are inclusive and welcoming spaces for everyone.

We'll also improve behavioural supports for residents with complex needs to protect their safety, and that of workers and other residents.

GUARANTEEING CAREGIVER LEAVES

Two-thirds of seniors receiving homecare services are also being cared for by family members. In many cases the caregivers are women who are already struggling to balance work and a family. It is difficult, emotional work that leaves families feeling stressed and stretched, and the government needs to do more to support those who are stepping in to fill gaps in the system and providing care to loved ones when they are aging, sick or recovering from illness.

A New Democrat government will ensure that people are able to take leave from their jobs to care for an ill family member or loved one.

TACKLING USER FEES IN HEALTH CARE

New Democrats believe that health care should be funded by progressive taxation, not through unfair user fees or flat taxes on the backs of the ill and the elderly. And no one should ever face cost barriers that deny them access to the health care they need.

Under Liberal and Conservative governments, people are now being charged out-of-pocket for more and more services, whether those are excessive hospital parking fees, out-of-pocket costs for doctor's notes, blood tests or uninsured fees for ambulances.

A New Democrat government will work with health sector partners to eliminate unfair user fees on patients and their families throughout the health care system.

IMPROVING CANCER CARE

More Ontarians are living with cancer than ever before. Even as therapies and outcomes improve, a cancer diagnosis remains daunting.

An Ontario New Democrat government will improve cancer care by working to increase access to oral cancer treatments in order to improve care in and out of hospital, improving screening with a special focus on hard-to-reach communities and helping families navigate the cancer care system.

PROTECTING HOSPITALS AS THE HEART OF COMMUNITIES

Community care is extremely important to building wellness and improving the health of Ontarians, but it will not replace hospital care.

New Democrats see hospitals as more than just bricks and budgets. Hospitals are at the heart of our communities whether we live in big cities, small towns or rural or northern Ontario. People trust that their local hospital will be there to care for our families when we need it.

A New Democrat government will stop the cuts inside Ontario hospitals and ensure that hospital funding always keeps up.

We will undertake a review of staffing needs, and until it is complete, we will place a moratorium on any further layoffs of nurses and frontline health care workers, professionals and providers with a focus on reducing wait times in emergency rooms and for surgeries and diagnostic procedures.

And we will commit to expanding and improving rural health care. People in rural Ontario need services near to where they live.

FASTER EMERGENCY ROOM VISITS

When an Ontarian faces a medical emergency, they should be able to get care quickly in an emergency room close to home. However, according to the Ontario Hospital Association, emergency wait times are at their highest point since the province began to measure them. It only makes things worse when the Liberals cut hospital services in smaller communities. It puts lives at risk and overburdens neighbouring ERs.

We see a better future where Ontario is a leader in reducing wait times for families, children and seniors. By working with frontline health care providers and investing in the right supports for everyone, we will reduce wait times in emergency rooms.

A New Democrat government will achieve lower wait times by stopping further cuts to hospitals and conducting real health system capacity planning. We'll improve access to dental care and long-term care beds when people need them. We will make it easier to access mental health and addictions supports in our communities and to make urgent appointments with family doctors and nurse practitioners.

PROVIDING FASTER ACCESS TO FAMILY DOCTORS AND PRIMARY CARE

Ready access to primary care, whether with a family doctor or a nurse practitioner, keeps families healthy. Ensuring that people have ready access to primary care makes life less stressful, gives people answers and takes pressures off our hospital system.

However, thousands of Ontarians are searching and struggling to find a doctor and many communities are working hard to try to attract new doctors to their towns.

A New Democrat government will improve access to all primary care providers and make it easier for new Ontarians, new parents, students and residents of rural and Northern communities to find a family doctor. We'll also work with family doctors and nurse practitioners to improve urgent access to primary care providers within 24 hours of requesting an appointment.

CUTTING WAITS FOR SURGERY

Timely access to surgeries is essential to well-being, getting healthy more quickly and avoiding complications down the road.

In 2016, the Auditor General reported that long surgical wait times put patients at risk. It's time to change that.

A New Democrat government, working with hospitals and surgeons, will take steps to prevent surgery cancellations. Our goal will be to make better use of operating rooms so they do not sit empty while people wait for surgery.

IMPROVING QUALITY AND ACCESS TO MENTAL HEALTH CARE

Ontarians recognize the need for greater access to mental health care, but those supports simply are not there. Ontario's mental health system is failing too many people.

New Democrats have a vision to ensure that every Ontarian has access to mental health services, in their own communities or as close to home as possible.

A New Democrat government will establish province-wide mental health standards with a timeline for implementation for the first time in Ontario's history. We will implement the recommendations of the Select Committee on Mental Health and Addictions, including creating one organization responsible to the Ministry of Health and Long-term Care for ensuring that mental health and addictions programs and services are delivered consistently and comprehensively across Ontario.

We will address the shortage of counselors, psychiatrists, psychiatric nurses, street outreach workers and other mental health professionals to provide more support and training in mental health for police and emergency responders. And we'll invest in addiction rehabilitation and detox centres, and harm reduction services.

We'll also provide new emergency supports devoted to delivering urgent mental health care. We will make wait time information for mental health services available and work to tackle Ontario's growing opioid crisis.

MAKING DENTAL CARE MORE AFFORDABLE AND AVAILABLE

Good oral health is essential to the well-being of families, but too many Ontarians don't see a dentist and avoid treatments because of prohibitive costs.

A New Democrat government will work to improve access to dental care for Ontarians and take steps to address the growing numbers of Ontarians without workplace coverage.

IMPROVING CARE IN FIRST NATIONS COMMUNITIES

Today, First Nations families throughout Ontario continue to live without the health care services they need. In many ways, Ontario's health care system stops at reserves' boundaries but the provincial government's duty to care does not.

We recognize that First Nations have a direct relationship with the federal government, but we see Ottawa failing too many Indigenous people. Ontario must work together with First Nations to provide children, families and Elders with the very same level of access to great health care that every other Ontarian expects. This is our commitment. Waiting any longer is simply unacceptable.

PROMOTING HEALTH EQUITY

Health is a human right, but often health is profoundly impacted by poverty, systemic racism, homophobia and transphobia, sexism and ableism.

That's why New Democrats put health equity at the heart of our approach to health care. We believe that government, in partnership with communities and providers, should work to recognize and remove the barriers that stand in the way of health and health access.

We will protect and grow access to health care in French.

We will consult with Ontario's First Nations about their priorities and how to greater incorporate First Nation leadership in health care decision-making.

We will strengthen and expand community health services working with Community Health Centres, Nurse Practitioner-led Clinics, Family Health Teams and Aboriginal Health Access Centres to expand services to more communities and ensure proper compensation to recruit and retain health care professionals in community primary care. And we will increase access to care for LGBTQIA2S people.

SUPPORTING MIDWIVES AND COMMUNITY MATERNAL HEALTH SERVICES

New Democrats have a proud legacy of supporting access to midwives. In 1994, midwifery became a regulated health profession. Today, more than 800 registered midwives serve 90 clinics across Ontario. By improving access to midwifery services and addressing the biggest challenges facing the profession, we will expand access for expecting mothers and ensure a bright future for this profession.

A New Democrat government will improve access to midwifery services and address the pay inequity that midwives face. And we'll protect the ability of mothers in rural Ontario to give birth in their community hospital by protecting maternal health services and obstetrics wards and expanding options for parents such as Birth Centres and Midwife clinics.

IMPROVING PALLIATIVE CARE AND DIGNITY AT END-OF-LIFE

The need for palliative care is growing quickly. But too many people are not receiving the palliative and end-of-life care that they deserve. Hospices struggle to meet the needs in our communities and patients continue to be denied the home care they need in their final days or have to pay a high price to get it.



New Democrats believe all Ontarians have the right to comfort and dignity until the end of their lives.

A New Democrat government will work with community partners to establish the compassionate and accessible palliative care system that Ontario lacks but so urgently needs. We'll ensure that all Ontarians can make choices with dignity, until the very end of their lives. And New Democrats will respect the right of Ontarians to medical assistance in dying and ensure that every Ontarian has access to compassionate and high quality end-of-life care.

More affordable, livable cities and towns

Ontarians want to be able to afford a home they love, and get back and forth to work or school without spending hours in traffic or crammed into a packed bus or subway. They want to be able to provide for their families without worry. And they want to be able to enjoy the outdoors, go to the theatre, spend a night at a music festival or see a great movie made in their home province.

Unfortunately, this quality lifestyle is out of reach for many Ontarians. People are feeling like they are working harder but not getting ahead. Long, stressful commutes are eating into family time. And the demands of taking care of children and aging parents is stretching people too thin.

It's time for a government that understands and respects how hard people work and that believes that it can play a role in making everyone's lives easier.

A New Democrat government will put people at the centre of every decision and make Ontario more affordable and livable by:

CUTTING HYDRO COSTS AND BRINGING HYDRO ONE BACK INTO PUBLIC HANDS

Hydro bills in Ontario are too high. It is hurting families, businesses, the public, NGOs and public services across Ontario.

A New Democrat government will bring Hydro One back into public hands. We will reduce bills by as much as 30 percent, and will fix the problems that have driven hydro bills up in the first place.

An NDP government will take the landmark step of returning Hydro One to public ownership and oversight. A publicly-owned Hydro One would over time put billions back into serving the people of Ontario while keeping rates low.

We will end the practice of paying for electricity Ontario doesn't need, and immediately review and renegotiate bad private power contracts signed by Liberal and Conservative governments. We will equalize rural and urban delivery charges, cap private profit margins and end mandatory Time of Use billing.

Reducing bills by as much as 30 per cent is an ambitious but realistic goal. By investing in a public system we can increase conservation and generate long-term revenues and benefits for people and businesses across Ontario.



MAKING CHILD CARE MORE AFFORDABLE

There is an affordability crisis in child care and an NDP government will tackle it. Child care in Ontario is increasingly inaccessible and unaffordable, especially in Toronto where parents face the highest fees in the country. And that's if you can find child care. Currently there are regulated spaces for less than 18 per cent of kids under 12.

New Democrats believe providing safe, quality care for our children is one of the most important tasks a society can undertake. Early childhood education is a moral imperative and a public good, not a for-profit enterprise.

An NDP government will make it a priority for families to have access to high quality, affordable childcare regardless of income or location. Support should be focused on licensed care, an affordable fee scale, and new government funding will be provided exclusively to not-for-profit childcare.

We believe that the early childhood educators and skilled professionals who care for our children should be respected and deserve fair wages and working conditions.

GETTING ONTARIO MOVING BY MATCHING MUNICIPAL INVESTMENT IN PUBLIC TRANSIT

Public transit is an economic and public good that benefits everyone. For people across Ontario, public transit should be affordable, reliable transit that safely gets them where they need to go without long delays and overcrowding.

Affordable, reliable public transit means less stressful trips to work, to school and around cities and towns. It means fewer cars on the road, less pollution in the air, and more efficient movement of goods. Transit drives economic activity and builds vibrant communities.

New Democrats believe the province has a role to play in funding transit and an NDP government will match municipal operations funding for public transit on a 50/50 basis. This means investing more than \$800 million annually for transit, including more than \$330 million in Toronto alone. Stable provincial operating funding opens the door for cities to provide immediate service improvements and more affordable and equitable fares.

The Liberals promised that Metrolinx would take the politicking out of transit planning; instead it's only gotten worse. Politically motivated decision-making is what led to Kathleen Wynne's cancellation of Transit City, a stalled Downtown Relief Line, the loss of the Bus Replacement Program and communities waiting for two-way all-day GO service.

An NDP government will continue to build GO rail and bus networks to take cars off the road. This will include extending service to Niagara, and adding capacity to the GO networks' highest use routes, and a commitment to extending two-way all day GO service.

Transit expansion won't be limited to municipal systems and southern Ontario. We will be at the table to improve inter-regional transit options and New Democrats will bring much needed passenger rail service to communities across Northeastern Ontario by restoring service on the Ontario Northlander.

MAKING HOME OWNERSHIP A REALITY

People dream of owning a home, but in Ontario's big cities, especially Toronto, the dream of home ownership is out of reach for many people.

Houses should be places for people to build a life and and raise their families, not for speculation. A New Democrat government will help home buyers by clamping down on land speculation and property flipping.

We will reform condominium legislation to protect people's investment from shoddy workmanship and truly bad deals.

We will actively work with the federal government to build a National Housing Strategy that puts people first and take steps to address the supply of housing. We will encourage development of 'missing middle' housing, meaning higher density communities that fit between detached single family homes and high-rises.

MAKING RENTALS AFFORDABLE

Increasingly in areas like Toronto, urban rents are pricing students, low-income people, and young families out of the places they want to live. Data shows that in the six months between June 2016 and January 2017, the cost of a one-bedroom apartment in Toronto increased by more than \$300.

This isn't limited to Toronto. As of March 2017, of the ten most expensive Canadian cities to rent, six are in Ontario: Toronto, Barrie, Ottawa, Kingston, Oshawa and St. Catharines. That's unsustainable.

A New Democrat government will make affordable rents a priority. As a first step we will close the 1991 rent control loophole so that people can count on stable rents. Only New Democrats will protect people from overnight, unlimited rent increases. We will strengthen the rights of tenants to safe, well-maintained rental units and crack down on delinquent landlords.



We will create more affordable housing, committing to investing in social housing that meets the needs of low-income Ontarians. We will invest in co-op housing, restoring a viable and sustainable model of housing that puts people in control of multi-unit housing.

IMPROVING CONSUMER PROTECTION

Families should be able to make consumer decisions based on full and accurate information. And no one should be gouged based on where they live, their gender, high-pressure sales tactics or legal but predatory practices.

New Democrats will help people to feel confident that when they make a purchase, they're being treated fairly by addressing the 'Pink Tax' where identical products are sold at higher prices when marketed to women. We'll put a stop to predatory practices of payday loan companies, door-to-door sales of water heaters, air-conditioners and furnaces. And we'll stop gas price gouging, especially in Northern Ontario.

REDUCING AUTO INSURANCE RATES

The Liberals promised to reduce auto insurance rates by 15 per cent. That never happened, even as benefits have continued to decrease.

A New Democrat government will ensure drivers get the 15 per cent savings and more, while protecting benefits.

We will tackle the regional inequities in auto insurance which disproportionately affect low-income and racialized communities, and continue to drive toward greater affordability.

INCREASING ACCESS TO RECREATION

Access to recreation is critical to improving health and building our communities. Liberal and Conservative downloading has meant that cities are cutting and charging more for programs, making it harder for everyone to enjoy access.

A New Democrat government will work with municipalities and local community organizations to support affordable, accessible recreation ranging from sports fields, to arenas, to curling rinks, to community hubs and libraries. We'll support access to recreational activities for low- and middle-income families.

PROTECTING PROVINCIAL PARKS AND GREEN SPACE

Ontario has the gift of unparalleled beauty and wild spaces. We need to keep it that way.

Our shared green future requires protecting delicate ecological networks, biodiversity and wildlife.

Over the past decades, Liberals and Conservatives have too often put the interests of big developers ahead of protected areas and our shared green space. Natural spaces have been sold off to the highest bidder, and biodiversity has been put at risk.

New Democrats will restore balance, and make sure that every infrastructure and development decision is ecologically sound and sustainable. We'll increase protection of Ontario parks and expand access and use of green spaces and parks across Ontario while protecting ecosystems and biodiversity. We'll protect the Greenbelt and protect our urban river systems while encouraging sustainable, smart growth.

And we'll support youth jobs by providing more opportunities to experience nature by establishing a new Ontario Ranger Program.

Spaces like Ontario Place, which serve an urban population, should stay in public hands. An Ontario NDP government will pursue a future for Ontario Place that embraces culture, recreation and entertainment that's accessible to all Ontarians.

IMPROVING ACCESS TO HEALTHY, AFFORDABLE FOOD

Ontario is blessed with great wealth, bountiful farmland and abundant fresh water, and yet we see growing food insecurity and our food and water systems at risk. Farmers are feeling the squeeze, health budgets are under increasing pressure and families are struggling to pay the bills and put food on the table.

Instead of clean water and healthy food, Ontario had over 50 water advisories in First Nations communities last year. Our food

banks serve 335,944 adults and children each month and one in five children lives in poverty. It's nothing short of a public policy failure that we continue to spend more than \$6 billion annually treating preventable diet-related illnesses like diabetes.

A New Democrat government will create a comprehensive food and water strategy that safeguards and promotes access to nutritious food and clean water in Ontario. We will work with farmers, fishers, Indigenous people, inner city organizers, entrepreneurs, public health leaders, academics, chefs, gardeners and others to develop a plan that protects our water and food lands and develop a provincial food and water policy that serves the public interest.

Food security cannot be achieved unless the people who grow, process and sell the food are successful. Over 200 different types of crops are grown in Ontario, and farms come in all shapes and sizes. An urban roof-top garden and a multi-thousand acre cash crop operation



are radically different, but both play a crucial role in Ontario's economy and culture.

Our focus on putting food and water first will ensure that we protect our drinking water, support our farmers, teach our children to make healthy food choices, and address income inequality and persistent poverty in Ontario so that all families across the province have access to nutritious food and clean drinking water.

MAKING COMMUNITIES SAFER FOR ALL OF US

Ontarians deserve the peace of mind that comes from knowing their streets, homes and communities are safe, and that they will receive fair and equal treatment in the justice system, delivered without delay.

Policing, the courts and correctional settings have never been as complicated as they are today. There is growing recognition that systemic issues, along with mental health, often impact the people who interact with Ontario's justice system. Add to this the very real strain the opioid epidemic and other addictions are placing on the courts and policing resources. Those who work on the front lines and other experts agree that we have a crisis in the province.

The goal of a New Democrat government will be to address the root causes of crime and violence. We are committed to an Ontario where victims are listened to, individuals in the criminal justice system are treated fairly and in a timely way, where no one is defined by their experience, where public safety workers are respected, and where all Ontarians feel safe.

We recognize the importance of police in helping create safe communities and an NDP government will ensure that police

have the training and the tools in place to help create them. And we'll work to foster greater public accountability and transparency in policing and address issues like racism and homophobia. We will equip police services with the staff and resources they need for the challenges they face, with an emphasis on community policing models. We will look to expand pilot and regional partnerships with health programs, particularly first response mental health programs, as a way to de-escalate conflicts wherever possible.

Ontario's 21 correctional facilities are overcrowded, often violent and ill-equipped to deal with the complex issues facing the people that enter their gates. Yet previous governments have avoided dealing with problems in our correctional system, including aging facilities, drug abuse and insufficient staffing. And the Liberal approach of opening up public institutions to the private sector have failed.

New Democrats will ensure our correctional and community facilities are properly staffed, including nurses and social workers. Correctional staff should expect to have the resources they require to do their jobs right, and to know that they'll return safely each day to their families.

Too many Ontarians involved in the criminal justice system are there because of an inflexible approach to conditional release. Instead of providing those who commit minor infractions with a path to becoming productive members of our communities, they are too often mixed into the criminal justice system and bounced between unstable housing, the courts and correctional settings.

New Democrats support the Human Rights Commissioner, the Ontario Ombudsman and others calling for an end to isolation practices.

Improving social services and taking real actions to end poverty

Ontario is one of the wealthiest provinces in one of the wealthiest countries in the world. We owe it to each other to end poverty in our province and ensure that everyone can live a healthy life with dignity.

Poverty has become worse under Liberal and Conservative governments. They have chosen not to make the necessary investments in income security programs, social services, childcare or affordable housing and, in fact, have cut the programs that people depend on. As a result, people on social assistance are living far below the poverty line, the labour market is becoming increasingly precarious for Ontario workers, and the wait list for social housing continues to grow.

New Democrats believe in getting the basics right: that we should be helping people struggling to put food on the table, not cutting taxes for profitable corporations or giving tax breaks to the wealthy.

A New Democrat government will transform and modernize the social safety net to ensure everyone has the supports they need to be resilient and fully participate in the life of our province.

We'll make homelessness prevention a priority. We will look carefully at the results of the pilot on Basic Income, and will build policy based on the conclusions of that pilot. An NDP government will support any measures that realistically and practically gets Ontarians out of poverty. And we'll take real action to support vulnerable Ontarians, reform social assistance programs, repair social housing, restore tenant protections and provide affordable childcare so that parents can participate in the workforce.

FIXING AND IMPROVING SOCIAL ASSISTANCE

People on social assistance deserve dignity and to be treated with respect. Instead of making it easier for people to get healthy and get out of poverty, it's only become harder.

Arbitrary cuts to programs like the Special Diet Allowance and the Community Start Up and Maintenance Benefit, which helps low-income people with one-time expenses like a deposit for an apartment, has only made life harder.



An NDP government will restructure Ontario's social assistance system to ensure that we have a person-centred approach to support, ensuring that people are linked with appropriate services from housing, to counselling, mental health support and addiction services.

New Democrats will take the politics out of setting social assistance rates and use an evidence-based approach to ensure benefits reflect the real costs of basics like food and shelter, through a Social Assistance Review Committee.

INVESTING IN CREATING AND REPAIRING SOCIAL HOUSING

Social housing plays a critical role in providing affordable and emergency housing for thousands of Ontarians in need. The waitlist for placement in social housing in Toronto alone currently contains about 97,000 households and 176,000 people.

Toronto is investing \$900 million in the repair of Toronto Community Housing Corporation (TCHC) stock, but so far neither the federal nor provincial governments have come to the table with their share. As a result, there is a possibility that the TCHC will have to close some units rather than bringing them up to current safety standards.

This is a problem that faces communities across Ontario. The Ontario Non-Profit Housing Association estimates that the current backlog is \$2.6 billion across the province. The result is that people in communities from Windsor to Ottawa lack access to social housing.

New Democrats will meet the province's responsibility to repair social housing and shelters across Ontario.

PROTECTING OUR CHILDREN IN CARE AND SOCIAL SERVICES

Between 90 to 120 children who are in, or have been in, care die in Ontario each year. There are 12,000 children waiting for mental health services and children are being moved far from their communities to access residential beds. The system is putting our children at risk.

Budgets in child welfare and children's mental health have been flat-lined for years, and it's the same story across our social services. Agencies and workers are having to do more with less, resulting in tragic consequences.

New Democrats believe in an Ontario where children in care are given the supports they need to truly thrive, where racialized and Indigenous children are not overrepresented in care, and where every effort is made to keep children safe.

A New Democrat government will give children in Ontario's child welfare and youth justice systems the right to contribute to decisions that are being made about their future. We'll give the Provincial Advocate's Office more and expanded investigative and oversight powers, and we'll raise the age of protection to give kids and young adults a true chance to succeed. We'll also end the practice of allowing children to be put in solitary confinement.

CONTINUITY OF CARE AND SUPPORT

Ontarians with developmental disabilities and their families should have every opportunity to succeed and have a full life. That means ending the practice where people have to reapply for supports after turning 18. People shouldn't have to reapply for supports, and shouldn't have to go on a long waiting list for services like respite, employment training, life skills training or appropriate support services.

Lifelong learning that's affordable and accessible

Public education is one of the great equalizers. It can help children meet their potential and support them in fulfilling their dreams, no matter where they live, who their parents are, or what their economic circumstances.

New Democrats share an unwavering commitment to quality, equal opportunity education for all. From inside the classroom to the broader community, our education system must surpass the expectations all Ontarians have for publicly-funded education.

Education must be accessible and affordable. It must give all kids whatever support they need to meet their potential, no matter where they live. And it must be available throughout one's life.

Our goals in education and lifelong learning are ambitious and meeting them will be no easy task. It will take dedicated people, working with real dollars and a new education funding formula to deliver this bold vision for education. Together, we will build an education system without compromise, where all students receive the support they need to thrive in the world of tomorrow.

KINDERGARTEN TO GRADE 12

Giving our children the best start in life isn't just how we create healthy, well-rounded Ontarians, an educated workforce and build our province, it's our moral duty.

Years of Liberal and Conservative budget cuts and attacks on education workers have hurt Ontario's classrooms. Students aren't getting the support and one-on-one time they need to meet their full potential. Too many schools are closing, meaning kids spend more time on buses, and too many schools are in a dire state of disrepair.

An NDP government will give our kids the best start possible.

MAKING KINDERGARTEN CLASSES SMALLER

The current policy of limiting class sizes using an 'average' has not kept classes manageable and conducive to learning. Today, too many kindergarteners are crammed into classrooms with as many as 30 students while others do not have access to an early childhood educator.

New Democrats will put class size caps on every kindergarten class; we know that small class sizes help our youngest students adjust to their first few years at school and help students of every age reach their potential.



We will also end the practice of SK/Grade 1 split classrooms, to ensure that every kindergarten student derives the full benefits of the early learning curriculum.

PROVIDING MORE SUPPORT FOR SPECIAL NEEDS

Ontario families know that every child brings creativity and excitement to the classroom. And students living with behavioral, communication, intellectual, physical or multiple exceptionalities are eager to learn alongside their peers. Unfortunately, their excitement is too often met with limited resources and long wait times.

The Liberals have not provided adequate support to special education. This leaves our most vulnerable students behind while school boards, parents and education workers are left scrambling to fill the gaps. Every day a student with exceptional needs waits to be assessed is a day they will never get back.

New Democrats believe in a timely accommodation of student needs, from the time an assessment is requested to when supports are provided, to ensure that each and every student requiring special supports gets it. We will fund special education according to individual student needs, not overall student numbers. We'll also increase access to educational assistants and professionals, including social workers, for all students requiring their services.

SUPPORTING CHILDREN WITH AUTISM THROUGH ADULTHOOD

Every child with autism must receive the support they need to thrive, regardless of age. Today, too many children with autism are being moved from one waitlist to another, while parents know their children are struggling to meet their potential. We need to better manage transitions as children enter school and young adults leave school so people aren't left on waitlists because of age.

New Democrats have been successful at fighting back Liberal cuts to support for children with autism. In government, we will be able to do more by developing a comprehensive Autism Strategy. We'll make sure support is based on need, not age, and that support continues through an individual's transition to adulthood.

FIXING STUDENT ASSESSMENT AND EQAO

As we work to create an environment where all students have the opportunity to meet their potential, the importance of rigorous, accurate evaluation of classroom performance cannot be overstated. But our evaluation methods must reflect a student's true grasp of the material, not simply the ability to take a test.

Instead of narrowly-focused, standardized testing, we need to broaden the definition of successful learning and rely more on the individual assessments of each student by qualified teachers. Teachers know their students best, and they must be given more respect and ability to use their professional judgment to assess student performance.

A New Democrat government will transition from EQAO to a random sampling testing model and reinvest the savings back into the education system. And we'll review the mandate of the Education Quality and Accountability Office to find ways to place more emphasis on teachers' professional judgement to measure student progress.

REPAIRING OUR SCHOOLS

Our community schools are more than just bricks and mortar. They are our parks, playgrounds and public spaces – the bedrock of our communities. New Democrats believe it's time that they were treated as such.

After decades of school closures and cuts to infrastructure investments, many of the schools that remain face a mounting repair backlog of nearly \$15 billion province-wide. Children are being sent to schools with leaky roofs, broken boilers and thousands of students are being sent to learn in dilapidated portables.

A New Democrat government will take immediate action to bring community schools up to a reasonable state of repair and address all repairs quickly moving forward.

PROTECTING FRENCH-LANGUAGE EDUCATION

Children of all ages should have reasonable access to publicly-funded education at a French-language school of their choice in the community where they live.

New Democrats will protect and enhance French-language education.

INDIGENOUS STUDENTS

It's a fundamental principle of public education that all children get the same opportunities to succeed no matter who they are or where they live. In this respect, Ontario schools are failing First Nations children.

On-reserve schools in Ontario have fewer resources and fewer opportunities to engage and educate students compared to other Ontario schools. And while the clear majority of provincial elementary and secondary schools report having First Nations, Métis and Inuit students enrolled, less than half offer professional development on Indigenous issues.

New Democrats also recognize the importance of Indigenous education for all students, on- and off-reserve. We will work with school boards and First Nations to increase Indigenous education activities such as language programs, cultural support programs and ceremonies.



CREATING HEALTHY AND SAFE CLASSROOMS

Education workers report some of the highest levels of lost work time due to injuries in the workplace. Parents are growing uneasy about their children's safety at school. School boards are legally responsible for both student achievement and well-being, but are not being given sufficient resources to ensure the well-being of all learners within a classroom. Chronic underfunding has led to issues with classroom violence.

Supporting teachers, educational assistants, curbing class sizes and supporting our most vulnerable students will be important steps in making classroom environments safer and more conducive to learning.

SUPPORTING DEMONSTRATION SCHOOLS

Provincial and demonstration schools provide intensive support for blind, deaf blind, and/or severely learning disabled students. They have a great track record of success and until gaps are filled in local schools, they fill a need for families across Ontario.

New Democrats believe that Ontario's provincial and demonstration schools must be kept open and properly funded as they have a positive, life-changing impact on children with exceptional needs. We will lift the current cap on classes on provincial and demonstration schools.

LEARNING FOR A LIFETIME: TRAINING, COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES

Tuition fees have increased by roughly 400 per cent since 1990, making Ontario the most expensive province to access college or university education. Skyrocketing costs are making post-secondary education and training out of reach for too many Ontarians. And those who are able to enroll are often facing

student debt the size of a mortgage; new grads are one of the fastest growing groups of food bank users in Ontario. That is no way to start your adult life.

People across Ontario continue to pay for their education decades after they've left the classroom. This needs to change for people today and in the future. It's unfair to people, and hurts the ability of people to get the job they want.

Liberal and Conservative governments have failed to invest in our post-secondary schools. Ontario has ranked last on per student funding in Canada for six consecutive years. Under the Liberals, the average Ontario university student needs to work twice as long as their parents did to afford one year of tuition.

New Democrats believe every young person should have a debt-free start. Achieving this will require a major rethink and overhaul of tuition, grants, loans, job opportunities and experience, and how we fund Ontario's post-secondary institutions. We are committed to a debt-free start for every Ontarian.

INCREASING THE ROLE OF COLLEGES IN LIFE LONG LEARNING

Ontario's educated workforce is one of our strongest global competitive advantages.

A New Democrat government will work with colleges and employers to ensure college graduates are ready for the workforce. And we'll help colleges and employers to partner to provide ongoing training for people in order to ensure workers can benefit from changes in technology.

Leaving the next generation a cleaner, greener province

Climate change is already changing our weather, our economy and impacting our daily lives. As Canada's biggest province, Ontario has an important role in fighting climate change. We owe it to our planet and to the generations to come.

Ontarians understand how critical the fight for a cleaner, greener future is. But the Liberal government's environmental record has put an unfair burden on low-income and rural families. And their action has rarely measured up to the promises.

We need a real action plan that protects our land, water and air, while bringing Ontarians on board so they can be part of building a better future for themselves and their children.

The New Democrat vision for fighting climate change includes carbon pricing, aggressive energy, water and land conservation and renewable energy. It is all based on the idea that our province must make a 'Just Transition' to a green future where nobody is left behind.

MAKING SURE CARBON PRICING IS FAIR, TRANSPARENT AND EFFECTIVE

New Democrats have long supported reducing greenhouse gas emissions essential to fighting climate change. We support cap and trade. We believe that carbon pricing is one way for Ontarians to move together towards a zero carbon future. But we need a just transition where no one is left behind.

New Democrats believe carbon pricing must be fair, effective and transparent. We are extremely concerned about a lack of equity in the Liberal system, the lack of transparency regarding how funds are spent, and we are worried that without tighter controls, it won't have the effects on limiting GHGs and reducing climate change that people expect.

We will dedicate at least 25% of cap and trade revenues to support communities and individuals with disproportionate burdens, such as northern and rural Ontarians and low-income families. We will ensure that workers in trade-exposed industries are protected as Ontario makes a just transition to a low-carbon economy.

PROMOTING CONSERVATION

Conservation is the least expensive and most environmentally friendly way of serving Ontario's energy needs. Families should be rewarded



when they make decisions that contribute to conservation, and we'll make sure they are.

A New Democrat government will encourage conservation by making sure that when people use less electricity or home heating fuel, they pay less. We'll maintain strong emissions standards in Ontario and invest in homes and businesses to help them become more efficient. And we'll make sure families and businesses have access to the highest available efficiency vehicles, appliances, buildings, and equipment.

UPDATING THE ENVIRONMENTAL BILL OF RIGHTS

New Democrats introduced Ontario's Environmental Bill of Rights in 1994, establishing the world's first Environmental Commissioner as an independent officer of the Legislature. These important institutions give Ontarians the right to know about the environmental impacts of government policy, to participate in decision-making and to petition the government when changes are needed.

But for the past 20 years, Conservative and Liberal governments have failed to meaningfully update the Environmental Bill of Rights to keep it relevant and effective. An effective and meaningful Environmental Bill of Rights is needed now more than ever, and an NDP government will update it to restore transparency, public participation and accountability whenever the environment is impacted.

CLEANING UP THE GRASSY NARROWS MERCURY DISASTER

Fifty years ago, the Reed Paper Company dumped tonnes of mercury directly into the Wabigoon-English River system in the traditional territories of the Grassy Narrows and Wabaseemoong First Nations. Today, people in the area are still being exposed to mercury when eating fish and the sport fishing tourism industry has collapsed. Despite clear and ongoing evidence of mercury contamination the river has not been cleaned up.

A New Democratic government would insist that all parties return fully-engaged and prepared to see the mandate of the Mercury Disability Board process through so that the generations who have experienced the devastating effects of mercury disease can start to heal. In consultation with the communities and experts, we would follow through on evidence of ongoing mercury contamination and ensure the river is cleaned up once and for all.

We would explore the feasibility of establishing a permanent home for the study and treatment of Minamata disease that would also provide good paying jobs for the Kenora area, and turn the legacy away from tragedy towards one of possibly leading the world in the study and treatment of mercury poisoning.

Creating a more equitable province where diversity is celebrated and rights are respected

Every Ontarian should have the opportunity to succeed and make a safe, happy, comfortable life, no matter who they are. However, too many people feel unsafe, excluded and see opportunities taken away because of race, religion, abilities, gender, or sexual orientation. We need to stop this.

A New Democrat government will be committed to the principles of inclusion, equity and protecting human rights, celebrating diversity and actively working for greater inclusion. Our school curriculum will teach about equity so students can see the diversity of Ontario reflected in their classrooms and curriculum.

We will keep working until every Ontarian enjoys truly equal rights and opportunities and is able to live freely with a strong sense of community belonging and without harassment, intimidation or discrimination. And we will apply an intersectional and gender lens to how we construct every provincial budget.

ELIMINATING HOMOPHOBIA AND TRANSPHOBIA

Homophobia and transphobia must be eliminated so that Ontario is a place where every person feels safe to live authentically.

New Democrats will make sure that LGBT-QIA2S people have access to appropriate and timely health care options that are friendly and competent and meet their respective needs. And that youth get the support they need – like mental health services, access to housing and non-restricted access to the labour market – to end the prevalence of suicide attempts.

LGBTQIA2S youth should have access to supportive, safe and appropriate foster care placements without delay or barriers.

ENDING ANTI-BLACK RACISM

A New Democrat government will acknowledge the reality of anti-Black racism, including the systemic discrimination and implicit bias that negatively impact the everyday life of many members of Ontario's Black community.

We will actively work to eliminate systemic anti-Black racism from government services. Within our policing institutions, school boards, children's aid societies, workforce and also appointments on public boards, commissions and decision-making bodies. We have a responsibility to ensure that all Ontarians



are treated equally and fairly by the institutions that belong to them. By working collaboratively with members of the community, established and emerging advocacy groups, and all other allies who believe in a fair and just society, we'll ensure that the reality of Ontario lives up to its promise.

HALTING ISLAMOPHOBIA

The number of police-reported hate crimes targeting Muslim-Canadians has more than doubled over a three-year period, even as the total number of hate crimes dropped.

The Muslim community should be able to attend prayer services without fear. Muslim Ontarians should feel safe, valued and respected as they go about their lives, and a key part of this will be to work with police to investigate and prosecute hate crimes.

Government will take proactive steps within our education and justice systems, including an education campaign, to recognize and stop Islamophobia and take every opportunity to condemn Islamophobia and hatred in all its forms.

STOPPING ANTI-SEMITISM

New Democrats know that anti-Semitism has no place in the province of Ontario: the Jewish community should be able to live and attend prayer services without fear. Anti-Semitism should be added to the scope and mandate of the Anti-Racism Directorate. Our government will take proactive steps within our education and justice systems, including an education campaign, to ensure future generations are aware of the devastating impact of anti-Semitism.

REMOVING BARRIERS AND CREATING OPPORTUNITIES FOR PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

Ontario is at its best when everyone is able to reach their full potential and people of all abilities feel included and see themselves in Ontario's future. People of all abilities must have the opportunity and lifelong supports to succeed and thrive.

Ontario's New Democrats are committed to the full implementation and enforcement of the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act and removing all forms of barriers, particularly to the job market. And we will make sure government initiatives are designed to help people of all abilities access government services.

INDIGENOUS RELATIONS AND RECONCILIATION

First Nations, Métis, and Inuit people in Ontario continue to face numerous systemic barriers to basic rights enjoyed by others in Ontario: from dirty water to unsafe housing, to disproportionate incarceration and gendered violence.

A New Democrat government will make it a top priority to ensure that Indigenous peoples in Ontario are at long last able to fully realize their human rights. The days of unsafe drinking water, dilapidated and unsafe schools, second-rate health care services, high rates of suicide and violence in Indigenous communities can not continue.

Where the federal government has failed in its responsibility, an Ontario New Democrat government will act in consultation and cooperation with First Nations governments and send the bill to Ottawa. There is no excuse for anyone in Ontario to not have clean water and safe living conditions.

An Ontario led by New Democrats will enter into a true government-to-government relationship with First Nations, affirm our commitment to existing accords, and honour agreements. This means we will honour current funding formulas for First Nations programs and through consultation determine other targeted areas in need of support.

Ontario's Indigenous communities have young populations of smart, hard-working people. It's our goal to create greater economic and post-secondary opportunities for young Indigenous people in Ontario. We will work in collaboration and cooperation with First Nations to support Indigenous businesses and social enterprises and create jobs.

Canada's residential schools have had a devastating inter-generational impact on Indigenous communities. New Democrats support the conclusions and recommendations

of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission as well as accept the responsibility of renewing the relationship between peoples and governments in the spirit of real reconciliation.

New Democrats supported the establishment of a national Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women Inquiry, and will aid in the work of the Commission now underway in any way we can. We would also ask the OPP to form a special investigative task force to solve these crimes and give closure to the families of Ontario's Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls.

First Nations and other Indigenous children are overrepresented to a point of crisis in the child welfare system. New Democrats are committed to culturally appropriate care of children in need, and families in crisis.



New Democrats reject the historic approach of governments to impose outcomes on Indigenous people in Canada. An example of how it shouldn't be done was the Liberal Government's Far North Act (FNA) that was developed without meaningful consultation with First Nations communities. A New Democratic government would replace the Act with something that is the product of extensive consultation with Indigenous communities and relevant industries.

New Democrats long ago committed to the principles of sharing crown resource royalties with Indigenous communities that are predicated on fairness and recognition of treaty obligations.

Working with First Nations and investors, a New Democrat government would clarify the Duty to Consult and provide the appropriate supports so that First Nations, investors, and northern communities can get clarity on whether projects will move ahead or not.

New Democrats would look to the many First Nations ideas on how infrastructure to the future Ring of Fire development can be built, including, but not limited to, First Nations proposals on the refurbishment of the northeastern and Algoma rail lines.

RECOGNIZING OUR FRANCOPHONE CULTURE

Ontario has a proud francophone heritage and francophone culture, but there are unrealized strengths and opportunities in our Franco-Ontarian community.

A New Democrat government will ensure that Ontario recognizes and celebrates its francophone history and that there is a strong future for Franco-Ontarian culture in Ontario.

We will build our economy by meeting the target of five per cent francophone immigration, and ensure talented, skilled francophones see Ontario as an attractive place to live and don't automatically default to Quebec.

Our government will take a high-level approach to francophone affairs by starting a broad consultation to update the French Languages Services Act and ensure that Franco-Ontarians can access government services in French online or by phone no matter where they live. And we will work to increase access to services in French in the health care and justice systems.

We will also expand educational opportunities by starting the process of establishing a Franco-Ontarian university, increasing access to special education for francophone students, and protecting and supporting French-language education across the province. And we will address Ontario's lack of affordable, licensed French-language childcare.

More transparent, accountable government at every level

It's time Ontarians had a government whose focus was getting things done for them, whether it's standing up for Ontario workers when trade deals get renegotiated, pushing for more funding for health care, fighting for families when tax deals get made, or making sure roads, bridges and transit in Ontario actually get built.

Ontario used to be a national leader. But instead of putting Ontario families and businesses first, Liberals have been focused on using Ontario's political clout to help the political fortunes of Liberal politicians in Ottawa and at Queen's Park.

We need to repair the provincial government's relationship with municipal and First Nations governments. Liberal and Conservative governments have downloaded their responsibility to local governments, while interfering in municipal affairs. It's time for a new partnership built on respect and mutual support, where every decision is in the best interest of Ontarians.

A New Democrat government will fight for a fair deal for Ontario at the national table.

GETTING A BETTER FEDERAL DEAL FOR ONTARIO FAMILIES

As the most populous province, and largest economy in Canada, Ontario has a responsibility to both lead within Canada and stand up for Ontario on the national stage.

When the federal government refuses to take action that's needed, like bringing about national universal pharmacare, affordable child-care, or addressing the need for clean water in First Nations communities, an Ontario NDP government will step up to do something about it.

An NDP government will be a leading voice at the Council of the Federation and in discussions with the federal government for increased commitments to health care, education, jobs and a sustainable future. We'll also demand increased federal funding for infrastructure, particularly for GTHA transit and passenger rail.

And we'll be at the table to make sure international trade deals work for people and fight for jobs when trade deals are being renegotiated.

MAKING A NEW DEAL WITH TOWNS AND CITIES

New Democrats understand and respect local government. Over 30 per cent of our Ontario NDP caucus has served in municipal government, including our Leader Andrea Horwath



who began her political career making changes to benefit families as a Hamilton City Councillor.

For too long, Liberals and Conservatives have failed to treat municipalities as partners by downloading costs and responsibility and forcing amalgamations.

A New Democrat government will recognize the regional, economic, social and cultural diversity of Ontario municipalities and make sure the province holds up its fair share of responsibility. We'll put a stop to downloading provincial expenses and responsibilities to local governments. This means fairly sharing responsibility for transit, housing and childcare costs and working collaboratively to identify progressive sources of revenue for municipalities.

We'll reform the Ontario Municipal Board to end the paternalistic overruling of legitimate municipal decisions and open municipal democracy so municipalities can experiment with electoral reforms such as permanent resident voting, alternative voting or other changes.

RECOGNIZING TORONTO'S UNIQUE ROLE

Toronto is one of the world's great cities. Its size, economic clout, diversity, social and cultural importance make it unique.

An NDP government will work in partnership with Toronto to recognize that it often faces unique challenges, and needs unique solutions.

As the province's capital, all Ontarians should feel welcomed and feel pride when they are in Toronto.

PARTNERING WITH SCHOOL BOARDS

Many of our New Democrat MPPs have served as trustees and local board chairs, so we understand that cuts to education budgets have made it harder than ever for trustees to do their job of putting students first.

An NDP government will end cuts to education, protect local schools and ensure that school boards have the resources they need to deliver the best education possible for students across Ontario no matter where they live. And we'll treat school boards and elected trustees as partners and respect their expertise and role as elected representatives.

BUILDING A GOVERNMENT-TO-GOVERNMENT RELATIONSHIP WITH FIRST NATIONS

The time is long overdue for Ontario's provincial government and First Nations governments to have an equal, respectful and collaborative partnership.

Liberals and Conservatives have failed to treat First Nations governments in a true partnership. New Democrats will fix that and enter into a true government-to-government relationship with Ontario First Nations, and recognize that Ontarians are all treaty people.

RAISING REVENUES THROUGH NEW, FAIR AND PROGRESSIVE SOURCES

Ontarians know good government isn't free. But they expect their government to use public dollars to ensure that they are getting the basics right: a health care system that keeps people healthy, an education system that helps everyone succeed, and a social safety net that helps people when they need it.

New Democrats' fiscal and tax policy will put working and struggling families first. Big profitable corporations and those at the top will contribute their fair share. Regressive taxes and user-pay fees introduced by Liberal and Conservative governments hurt low-and middle-income families the hardest, while lightening the load on those who can most afford to pay.

A New Democrat government will raise revenues through fair and progressive taxation and we'll end unfair flat fees and service charges that hit working people hard.

We will cancel the planned Liberal corporate tax cuts. Ontario's combined corporate tax rates are already the lowest in North America. The Liberal government believes that this is something to brag about. It's not. It is unfair to working families.

And we'll address personal tax exemptions that benefit the wealthiest Ontarians and ask them to contribute more fairly toward building Ontario's shared future.

MAKING THE INVESTMENTS FAMILIES NEED

Balancing budgets is important. It means more money going to health care, education, and eradicating poverty and less money going to big banks. But families and businesses know that sometimes making a long-term investment means borrowing money in the short-term. If that's what's needed, that's what we'll do.

NDP governments across Canada have run more balanced budgets, and have run smaller deficits than any other party. But people know that New Democrats will invest when that's what's needed. We will make the investments needed for seniors, young families, job creation and fighting poverty. We won't put arbitrary deficit reduction deadlines ahead of the well-being of the province.

We will manage debt, deficits and surpluses in the best interest of Ontario families. We'll provide a clear, transparent multi-year fiscal plan to get back to balance should deficit spending be necessary.



