

QUESTIONS FROM DECA SOCIALS:

My question as a tenant in DECA is, will our candidates pledge their support for vacancy control?

There is no doubt that life is getting more and more expensive. Even people with a decent job are finding it increasingly difficult to make ends meet.

I am proud of our New Democrat plan to tackle affordability, especially in our large urban centers, like Toronto.

We will bring back real rent control. We'll ensure you pay what the last tenant paid by ending vacancy decontrol. This will eliminate the financial incentive for landlords to squeeze tenants out of their homes in order to raise the rent.

What will you do to help small businesses get back on their feet?

Small businesses are the backbone of our communities. Combined, they are Ontario's largest job creator. Small businesses are the anchors of our neighborhoods, our main streets, and our local economies.

Today, our main streets are already dotted with "For Lease" signs and papered-up windows after two long pandemic years.

Ontario's NDP has been fighting for supports that will keep workers on the payroll, rebuild Ontario's battered main streets, and help entrepreneurs keep their dreams alive.

We have several initiatives to enable our small business community to thrive. We will bring in two rounds of the Small Business Recovery Grant, with one payment in 2022 and another in 2023. We will ensure, unlike under Doug Ford, that our program is responsive to business owners, and payments are dispersed in a timely manner.

We will launch a COVID-19 emergency business fund for Black-owned small businesses and entrepreneurs. We will also work with local and small businesses to ensure that commercial insurance is affordable for small businesses.

We will also work with the business community to review the Commercial Tenancies Act to standardize commercial lease agreements and explore the create of rent guidelines for small businesses.

What are you going to do for low-income seniors?

Every Ontarian, no matter their income, deserves dignified, affordable, quality care as they age. Whether that's excellent home and community care so older adults can stay in their own homes longer, or quality compassionate long-term care that prioritizes the well-being of residents over corporate profits.

The truth is our home and community care and long-term care systems are failing our seniors. This is especially evident during the past couple of years of the COVID-19 global pandemic. Corners have been cut. Proper staffing continues to be neglected, especially in the areas of home and community care.

A revolving door of underpaid part-time workers such as PSWs have been run off their feet, often forced to work at multiple long-term care homes just to make ends meet.

My Ontario NDP colleagues and I have a strong and doable plan to fix our system to protect our seniors, especially those who are most vulnerable. As a clinical neuropsychologist who specializes in the care of older adults, I am very proud of our plans to care for our oldest neighbours.

Our plan will establish provincial standards for home and community care services by creating a basket of core services Ontarians are entitled to receive, such as help with meal preparation and nursing care to help with medication management. We'll hold service providers accountable to ensure they meet the provincially regulated criteria for basic services.

We will align home and community care services to communities' needs. We will create culturally appropriate resources and training for home and community care programs and develop a provincial jobs-matching program to attract and match PSWs and other home and community care workers to communities where they have shared cultural and linguistic knowledge.

We will also create a caregiver benefit program. We recognize the invaluable role that family caregivers play, and all the ways they help with their time and money. That's why we will create a provincial Caregiver Benefit Program that provides direct support to family caregivers who do not qualify for the existing federal tax credit programs or respite care. This means-tested program would provide \$400 per month to informal caregivers.

QUESTIONS FROM GRADE 9 + 10 STUDENTS IN A MONARCH PARK COLLEGIATE CIVICS CLASS:

How will you tackle Gen Z's problem with mental health and stress? One in four Gen Z feel emotionally distressed.

The past four years have taken a toll on the mental health of so many Ontarians. Tragically young people have been particularly hard hit. The pandemic has been an emotional and psychological strain for many due to isolation, financial pressure, educational disruptions, and loss.

Children and youth often must wait up to 18 months for mental health care in Ontario.

We believe that everyone deserves timely access to mental health and addictions services. My New Democrat colleagues and I are committed to investing in mental health and addictions supports so Ontarians everywhere in the province can get the care they need when they need it.

Our plan entitled the Right to Timely Mental Health and Addictions Care for Children and Youth would cap wait times at 30 days at from the children and youth seeking mental health + addictions services.

An Ontario NDP government would fund mental and addictions infrastructure needed to bring equity of access. We would ensure that mental health care comes under the OHIP banner, because mental health is health.

Currently, our world is being killed by greenhouse gases. How do you plan on reaching net zero emissions?

We are in a climate crisis. Scientists have been clear: the scale and urgency of the climate crisis mean we must act now to prevent the worst impacts of climate change.

We have every reason to worry about our future.

Ontarians deserve a government that recognizes the challenges we face.

The Ontario NDP has created the Green New Democratic Deal that will focus on a just transition to the climate crisis we face.

The core values of our plan are equity, affordability, and reconciliation.

The transition to a net-zero economy must be equitable and just. Everyone deserves to share in the opportunity and prosperity it brings. An NDP Government will work to address the root causes of inequity, including environmental racism. We will use environmental justice as a lens for all programs and policies we deliver, ensuring that no community, industry, or group is left behind.

We must make life more affordable for everyday people in Ontario. Taking action on the climate crisis will not come at the cost of an affordable life for families. Rather, acting now will improve the quality of life for all Ontarians today and in the future.

Finally, we are committed to true and meaningful reconciliation. This will demand much more than the usual symbolic gestures on behalf of governments. It will demand good faith, careful, concrete action, and respect of treaties. As transition to a net-zero economy, the NDP commits to ensuring our actions are informed by traditional Indigenous knowledge. We're committed to respecting our treaty responsibilities as well as ensuring our actions are consistent with the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP).

I invite you to read our Green New Democratic Deal here:

<https://www.ontariondp.ca/platform/climate-jobs-justice>