

May 20, 2022

Rev. Susan Eagle
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RE: ISARC Election Questions for Party Leaders

Dear Susan,

Thank you very much for reaching out to send Ontario Greens your organization's questionnaire. We appreciate the opportunity to speak on these issues that matter to Ontarians. I am happy to provide you with a response on behalf of the party.

Sincerely,

Madeleine Crist
Office Manager
Green Party of Ontario

ISARC Questions

Income Security - Raising the incomes of the poorest Ontarians

What will your party do to increase the incomes of people who rely on Ontario Works and the Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP)?

Ontario Greens will phase in a Basic Income, with the first step being to double ODSP and OW rates and reduce aggressive clawbacks and restrictive asset inclusions. We will also eliminate any unnecessary red tape, reporting requirements, and other barriers typically faced by those needing financial support and maintain all existing supplementary supports that are available with current income assistance programs.

We will include meaningful consultation with people who have lived experience with poverty and existing social assistance programs in the design of all programs and services aimed at client-centred approaches for reducing poverty.

Will you index social assistance rates to the cost of living?

Yes, Ontario Greens will tie increases in the rate of social assistance to inflation.

What will you do to assure that everyone in Ontario has enough income to live above the poverty line?

Ontario Greens believe in treating people with dignity and fairness. This is one reason we support immediate increases in social assistance as the first step towards a Basic Income Guarantee that will provide economic security and resilience for people in Ontario.

Affordable Housing and Homelessness**What will your party do to substantially reduce the number of Ontario households experiencing core housing need?**

Our comprehensive housing plan, [“Building Livable & Affordable communities,”](#) lays out our detailed strategy for making sure everyone has a safe, affordable and accessible place to call home. Some key points include:

- Building 182,000 new permanently affordable community housing rental homes over the next decade, including 60,000 permanent supportive homes.
- Mandating inclusionary zoning and requiring a minimum of 20% affordable units in all housing projects above a certain size.
- Creating a seed fund for co-operative housing through direct funding and mortgage support.
- Renewing 260,000 community housing units over the next decade, in partnership with the federal government, under the National Housing Strategy.
- Providing nonprofit housing providers with the support and access to capital needed to purchase rental buildings to maintain affordability in perpetuity and explore preemptive right-to-buy for nonprofits.
- Partnering with nonprofits, co-ops, and community land trusts to use public land for permanently affordable rental housing and attainable home ownership options through low-cost long-term leases.
- Prioritising and speeding up the development approval processes for projects led by or in partnership with non-profit housing providers, and providing low-interest loans via a new revolving fund.

How will your party help keep rental housing affordable for low-income tenants?

Ontario Greens will provide security and support for renters by:

- Building 182,000 new permanently affordable community housing rental homes over the next decade, including 60,000 permanent supportive homes.
- Reinstating rent controls on all units to regulate rental increases year-to-year and implementing vacancy control to limit rent increases between tenancies.
- Extending financial support to 311,000 Ontario households via the portable housing benefit.
- Establishing a clear system for above-guideline rent increases that governs which renovations are necessary and can qualify for an increase in rent.

- Updating and strengthening sections of the Residential Tenancies Act that deal with the state of repair for multi-unit buildings to ensure tenants have homes that are safe.
- Strengthening rules and penalties for renovictions and bad faith evictions to keep apartments affordable.
- Increasing funding for the Landlord and Tenant Board (LTB) to hire additional adjudicators, add transparency to the appointment process, and eliminate forced online hearings. This will help address delays so that both landlords and tenants have timely access to justice.

How will your party address housing needs of urban and rural indigenous people?

Ontario Greens will fund 22,000 Indigenous-owned and operated permanent homes under an Urban and Rural Indigenous Housing Strategy. The strategy and implementation would be led by Indigenous communities to create homes for Indigenous peoples living in Ontario.

What new measures would you implement to end chronic homelessness?

Ontario Greens understand that poverty and homelessness are complex issues that have a number of underlying causes including systemic racism, oppression, mental health and addictions, and broken systems of social support. We will seek to address these and will restore the goal of ending homelessness in Ontario within ten years. Some of the actions we will take include:

- Resuming the homelessness census cancelled by the Ford government.
- Taking a Housing First approach and building 60,000 permanent supportive housing spaces with wrap-around services, and dedicate 10% of those homes to people with complex care needs.
- Engaging communities who have lived experience with homelessness in program development, as well as communities that face disproportionate levels of homelessness, including newcomers and racialized people.
- Increasing annual funding for women's shelters as well as safe and accessible transitional and supportive housing options for women and their families. Increase funding for culturally appropriate transitional housing.
- Provincially funding 50% of shelter and community housing costs while allowing municipalities to maintain management control.
- Phasing in a Basic Income, with the first step being to double ODSP and OW rates and reduce aggressive clawbacks.
- Annually reporting disaggregated data on the proportion of the population that experiences chronic homelessness, unmet health needs, food insecurity, lack of literacy, and low-paid work.

Justice for Workers

What will your party do to move the minimum wage towards a living wage for Ontario?

Ontario Greens understand that the cost of living varies across the province. We will increase the floor of the minimum wage each year by \$1, starting at \$16 in 2022, with a top-up in cities where the cost of living is higher.

What will your party do to ensure all workers in Ontario have access to paid sick days?

Ontario Greens will increase the number of provincially-legislated paid sick days from three to ten, and provide small businesses financial support to fund the program. We will also ban employers from requiring a sick note from a medical practitioner when an employee is ill.

What will your party do to ensure pay equity for workers, regardless of gender, racialization, immigration status or status as part-time, agency, app, contract or temporary workers?

In order to ensure pay equity Ontario Greens will:

- Ensure equitable and fair labour standards and working conditions for public service workers.
- Implement the Pay Transparency Act
- Restore and improve workers' rights to collective bargaining and immediately repeal Bill 124 and the problematic sections of Bill 106.
- Provide all workers with full and equal access to employment rights and benefits programs like EI, CPP, and WSIB, as well as equal pay for equal work, regardless of whether the employee is permanent, part-time, temporary, or casual.
- Implement a "Gig Workers' Bill of Rights," including, but not limited to, the following:
 - To protect gig workers and end the misclassification of employees, enact a presumption of employee status and the ABC test under the Employment Standards Act.
 - Ensure payment for all hours of work, from app sign-in until sign-out, with a clear and concise breakdown of how pay is calculated.
 - Ensure gig workers real wages are not reduced below the minimum wage by compensating for necessary work related expenses.
 - Make gig work count towards Permanent Residency applications.
- Close the loopholes that can lead to precarious work, including stricter regulations relating to the temp agency industry.
- Mandate that temp agency workers earn the same as directly hired workers when they do the same work, and that temp workers must become full hired employees after three months.

How will your party ensure all workers are able to assert their rights as workers?

We are committed to improving the rights of workers by restoring and respecting workers' rights to free and collective bargaining and immediately repealing Bill 124 and the problematic sections of Bill 106. We will also provide all workers with full and equal access to employment rights and benefits programs like EI, CPP, and WSIB, as well as equal pay for equal work, regardless of whether the employee is permanent, part-time, temporary, or casual.

Long Term Care**How will your party ensure that each resident gets a minimum of four hours of care per day from their hands-on PSWs, and nurses? When will you have this in place for each and every home?**

Ontario Greens will increase base funding for long-term care by 10%. In addition, we will mandate a minimum of four hours of nursing and personal care per resident per day, including a minimum of 48 minutes of care provided by a registered nurse and 60 minutes provided by a registered practical nurse by training, hiring and credentialing an increase in nurses and PSWs. We will legislate staffing in long-term care facilities to include a minimum of one nurse practitioner for every 120 residents and a staff composition that includes 20% registered nurses, 25% registered practical nurses, and 55% personal support workers. We will increase the minimum pay for PSWs to be \$25 an hour and RPNs to \$35 an hour so that we are able to bring in and retain the health resources that are needed to meet our goals for a high quality, non-profit, resident-centred system.

How will your party ensure that there is transparency in long term care oversight so that there is accountability for public dollars spent in for-profit as well as not-for-profit long term care homes?

By shifting entirely to non-profit long-term care providers, profit prioritization would end for operators of these services. Ontario Greens would collect meaningful quality indicators that would be used to track the operations and conditions of long-term care organizations, hold health service providers accountable and promote quality improvements. These indicators would be used to promote quality improvements, and would be collected and shared with the public to ensure accountability.

We will reinstate annual comprehensive inspections of long-term care homes without advance notice, and ensure homes with infractions face the legislated consequences. We will also transfer regulatory oversight of retirement homes to the Ministry of Long-Term Care and will create a system of formal oversight for long-term care Medical Directors working with the Ontario College of Physicians and Surgeons and the Ontario Medical Association. Ontario Greens are also committed to repealing Bill 218, which shields long-term care owners and operators from liability for negligence.

Across healthcare providers we will also fund the collection and meaningful use of socio-demographic and race-based data to identify and correct inequities in provided care and health outcomes.

How will your party ensure that licensing of long-term care homes is tied to quality of care service?

Ontario Greens will:

- Increase base funding for long-term care by 10% to implement important quality improvements including shifting to non-profit care
- Phase out for-profit long-term care and stop licensing new for-profit homes.
- Repeal Bill 218, which shields long-term care owners and operators from liability for negligence.
- Reinstatement of annual comprehensive inspections of long-term care homes without advance notice, and ensure homes with infractions face the legislated consequences.

- Strengthen obligations for long-term care licensees to respect and recognise residents' gender identity, as well as their social, cultural, spiritual, and language care needs.

How will your party ensure that standards of care are strictly enforced in each and every long-term care home? What kind of inspection will you provide? Will you reinstate comprehensive inspections cancelled by the present government?

Ontario Greens will reinstate comprehensive inspections and are committed to creating an accountable, nonprofit long-term care system. We will do this by:

- Increasing base funding for long-term care by 10%
- Phasing out for-profit long-term care and stop licensing new for-profit homes.
- Repealing Bill 218, which shields long-term care owners and operators from liability for negligence.
- Reinstating annual comprehensive inspections of long-term care homes without advance notice, and ensuring homes with infractions face the legislated consequences.
- Transferring regulatory oversight of retirement homes to the Ministry of Long-Term Care.
- Creating a system of formal oversight for long-term care Medical Directors working with the Ontario College of Physicians and Surgeons and the Ontario Medical Association.

How will your party provide proper staffing through recruitment, training, payment and retention of Long Term Care employees?

Ontario Greens know that the best way to recruit and retain long-term care employees is to invest in them. We will:

- Fast-track updated staffing plans and ensure consistency of care by requiring full-time personal support workers and nursing positions
- Establish a nurse-led task force to make recommendations on matters related to the recruitment, retention and safety of nurses.
- Immediately repeal Bill 124 and the problematic sections of Bill 106 and allow all healthcare workers to bargain collectively for fair wages. Until then, provide a minimum hourly wage of \$35 to registered practical nurses and \$25 to personal support workers.
- Increase nursing program enrollments by 10% every year for 7 years and the number of trained nurse practitioners by 50% by 2030 to enable us to meet our target of at least 30,000 additional nurses.
- Support certification upgrades for healthcare workers through expanded bridging programs at publicly funded post-secondary institutions.
- Fast-track credential approvals for 15,000 international healthcare workers, including nurses and personal support workers.
- Guarantee access to the most appropriate safety equipment in all healthcare facilities, and use the precautionary principle when protecting workers.
- Provide support for Black and Indigenous healthcare workers through greater mentorship opportunities, partnerships with allies, and equitable human resources processes.

Will you require each home to report at least quarterly on the actual hours of front line care received by residents as well as on the hours devoted to housekeeping and laundry services which are crucial for minimizing the spreading of infections?

Yes we will require reporting on many aspects of care including these. We understand that minimizing the spread of infections in long-term care homes is crucial and that data collection is needed to ensure quality within the system. We will:

- Prioritise licence proposals for small, community-based long-term care homes.
- Update design standards to improve outbreak management of infectious diseases.
- Stop contracting out food, housekeeping and laundry services.
- Recognise that essential caregivers play a critical role in residents' health and wellbeing, and ensure they can safely access their loved ones during prolonged infectious disease emergencies.
- Define the respective roles of the Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Long-Term Care in addressing health emergencies, and ensure the safety of long-term care residents is reflected in any provincial emergency plan.