

PROVINCIAL ELECTION 2007

Questions for candidates

No one deserves to live in poverty. And no one has to. With the right policies and programs in place, we could ensure everyone in Ontario has a decent standard of living.

The provincial election is a good opportunity to ask candidates what they will do to reduce poverty and improve the lives of low-income people in Ontario.

Social assistance rates

- i) Will your party, within six months of taking office, establish an expert panel, including low-income people, policy experts and advocates, to determine just and rational criteria for setting the rates for Ontario Works and the Ontario Disability Support Program, with the goal of ensuring everyone has a decent standard of living?

Yes. The Green Party of Ontario shall establish an expert panel within six months of taking office. This panel shall include low-income persons, policy experts, and advocates, to determine just and rational criteria for setting rates for Ontario workers and the Disability Support Program; with the goal of ensuring everyone has a decent standard of living.

- ii) How do you define a just and rational criteria is for establishing OW and ODSP rates?

A standard for establishing OW and ODSP criteria is understood to mean that those involved with OW and ODSP will have access to the ways and means in order to live with a decent standard of living.

Poverty reduction strategy

- i) Do you think Ontario needs a poverty reduction strategy?

Most definitely! Poverty has been permitted to exist and grow in a society that has, at it's disposal, the ability to reduce and eliminate this scourge.

- ii) What do you think reasonable goals of an Ontario poverty reduction strategy might be?

Reasonable goals will be set after consultation with the panel discussed previously in this document.

- iii) Will your party commit to work with low-income people and policy experts to develop and implement a poverty reduction strategy with clear goals timelines?

Yes.

Ontario Child Benefit

- i) Will your party maintain the Ontario Child Benefit announced in the 2007 provincial budget?

Yes, and increases will be tied to inflation and economic progress.

- ii) Will your party commit to speeding up the implementation of the Ontario Child Benefit?

No. Such a commitment would be unwise and deceptive towards those in need. However, the Green Party will look at implementing the benefit sooner.

Energy poverty

- i) Will your party commit to developing a low-income energy strategy that includes special energy rates for low income consumers, emergency financial assistance and fully-funded energy conservation programs that result in deep energy savings?

Yes. These strategies are necessary to ensure all citizens of Ontario are given the opportunity to live without the fear of the pitfalls associated with low incomes.

Workers' rights

- i) Will your party commit to raising the minimum wage to \$10/hour immediately upon taking office and establishing yearly increases to reflect the cost of living?

No. To state other wise would be fraudulent. The Green Party of Ontario is committed to raising the wage within 3 years, or sooner. However, workers now earning \$10/hour must be addressed in order to ensure a transition without conflict between those who will, in a short time, earn what they are now earning. In addition, a formula must be in place to ensure employers are not at an economic disadvantage during the transition.

- ii) Will your party commit to updating the *Employment Standards Act* to protect non-standard workers such as contract and temporary workers?

Absolutely! All workers in the province, country, and around the world, must be protected from the disadvantages associated with their 'type' of employment.