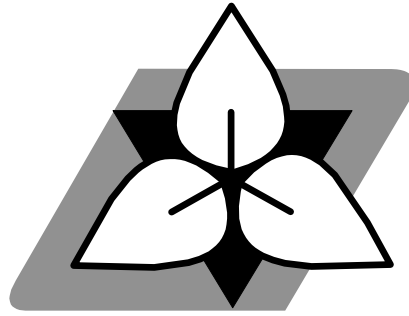


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***OFL/FTO***

# **A People's Charter**

. . . from anger to  
hope

## **A Workbook for Activists**

September 2002

***“ . . . recognition of the inherent dignity and of the equal and inalienable rights of all members of the human family is the foundation of freedom, justice and peace in the world . . . “***

***Preamble to the U.N. Declaration of Human Rights, 1948.***

Working in solidarity with communities, the labour movement in Ontario will fight for a society based on justice and equality, a society that values the inherent right of people to a decent job, publicly-funded education, accessible health care, affordable housing in a safe/sustainable environment, worker protection laws and social justice for all.

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## **PREAMBLE**

### **A People's Charter** . . .from anger to hope

A new future for Ontario - to pass from its present battered and weakened condition to one of hope.

Hundreds of activists and organizations were engaged in the creation of "A People's Charter" to guide the province through this transition and carry it into a future of hope. The task has been an arduous one for all the people involved in it, as they drew on their rich and diverse experiences, collaborating to achieve a special goal - a society which works for the prosperity of everyone.

"A People's Charter", the document you hold in your hands, is much more than mere pages bound. It is the source of hope for all the citizens and communities of Ontario.

To appreciate the need for hope, the document first examines and plumbs the depth of Ontario's troubles, thereby providing you with a yardstick to measure how high we must raise ourselves and how high we must set our goals. Some of the problems examined in the document are complex, inviting delicacy and diligence in finding their remedy, while others are simpler and can be fixed briskly. In either case, what is essential is an active political will to engage these problems. The political subterfuge and denial we have known to date in the province cannot be part of the program.

The activists and organizations who participated in the creation of "A People's Charter" insured by their very diversity that its message reflects the hope of all sectors of our society. The creative process through which the document evolved was inclusive and respectful of all persons and organizations involved. "A People's Charter" stands on a base of deep, comprehensive research and is built up from there on a frame constructed out of the experiences of many, many groups and individuals.

None of these organizations or individuals were interested in merely remedying the harmful effects of the current provincial government's short-sighted policies. They wanted to offer something more passionate and profound - hope for the future. Consequently, "A People's Charter" is a founding document, a well-spring and a source, from which issues a vision of Ontario that all of its people will cherish.

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## INTRODUCTION

### Activism and A People's Charter

In December 2001, delegates to the Ontario Federation of Labour convention adopted an Action Plan composed of four components:

- The Solidarity Network
- Fight for Health and Safety on the Job
- Organizing the Unorganized
- Creating a People's Charter for Ontario

The Solidarity Network builds on the work of local labour councils and will provide support for workers and communities who are under attack.

The Ontario labour movement's network of health and safety activists will continue to fight for a meaningful right to refuse unsafe work and protection against toxic substances in the workplace.

Despite the roadblocks put in our path by the Conservative government, there will be a renewed effort to bring the benefits and protections of collective bargaining to those who are still unorganized.

A People's Charter campaign brings progressive forces together to discuss, debate and decide on a priority agenda for rebuilding Ontario.

It is based on long-established core principles:

- democracy must be extended into every corner of our society, and must become part of the life of the economy and of the workplace;
- it is possible to organize a society on the basis of justice and equality;
- people have both individual and social rights, and
- the public sector of the economy is a vital necessity that must be strengthened and extended.

The people of this province have seen too much destruction of necessary laws and services in the past six years. We will rebuild the province and people will again have the health care, education, laws, programs and policies they need and deserve.

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There are three phases to the development of A People's Charter. In the first phase, representatives of the labour movement met with representatives of community and social action groups. They identified the needs of each community and agreed upon solutions to the difficulties they face.

The second phase will bring people together in small group meetings organized through local unions, labour councils, social justice and community organizations. These meetings will use this workbook to refine A People's Charter and finalize its content. At the conclusion of the consultation process, the final version of A People's Charter will be completed and submitted to each of the participating groups and organizations for adoption.

The third phase of A People's Charter will involve a massive public awareness campaign. The Charter will be taken into every corner of Ontario to get the endorsement of community and labour organizations. Finally, it will be used as a tool in the next provincial election. Candidates for office will have the opportunity to support the solutions offered in the Charter and pledge to implement them.

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## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

*We wish to thank the following organizations that took part in the consultations to develop A People's Charter:*

### **ARTS, HERITAGE & CULTURE**

American Federation of Musicians  
Toronto Musicians' Association  
Canadian Actors Equity  
Canadian Artists Representation - Ontario (CARO)  
Directors Guild of Canada (DGC)  
Alliance of Canadian Cinema, Television and Radio Artists (ACTRA)  
Mayworks  
Workers Arts and Heritage Centre  
Ontario Public Service Employees Union (OPSEU)

### **CHILD CARE**

OFL Womens Committee:

Amalgamated Transit Union (ATU)  
Communications, Energy and Paperworkers (CEP)  
Canadian Union of Public Employees (CUPE)  
Canadian Union of Postal Workers (CUPW)  
Hotel Employees and Restaurant Employees (HERE)  
International Association of Machinists (IAM)  
Elementary Teachers' Federation of Ontario (ETFO)  
Ironworkers  
Industrial, Wood and Allied Workers - Canada (IWA-Canada)  
Ontario English Catholic Teachers' Federation (OECTA)  
Office and Professional Employees International Union (OPEIU)  
Ontario Public Service Employees Union (OPSEU)  
Public Service Alliance of Canada (PSAC)  
United Food and Commercial Workers (UFCW)  
Union of Needletrades, Industrial and Textile Workers (UNITE)  
United Steelworkers of America (USWA)

Ontario Coalition for Better Child Care

Includes representatives from: education, health care, labour, child welfare prevention, rural, First Nations, francophones, social policy, anti-poverty, professional and women's organizations.

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**EDUCATION – K-12**

Canadian Union of Public Employees (CUPE)  
Ontario Public Service Employees Union (OPSEU)  
Elementary Teachers' Federation of Ontario (ETFO)  
Ontario English Catholic Teachers' Association (OECTA)  
Ontario Confederation of University Faculty Associations (OCUFA)  
Ontario Secondary School Teachers' Federation (OSSTF)  
Canadian Federation of Students (CFS)  
Ontario Teachers' Federation (OTF)

**EMPLOYMENT STANDARDS**

Employment Standards Working Group  
Canadian Union of Public Employees (CUPE)  
Centre for Social Justice  
Toronto Organizing for Fair Employment (TOFFE)  
Worker's Information Centre

**ENVIRONMENT**

Conservation Council of Ontario  
Ontario Environmental Network  
Ontario Electricity Coalition  
Canadian Union of Public Employees (CUPE)  
Ontario Public Service Employees Union (OPSEU)  
Industrial, Wood and Allied Workers (IWA)  
(Chair of OFL Energy & Environment Committee)

**FISCAL FRAMEWORK**

**Ontario Alternative Budget Working Group:**

The Ontario Alternative Budget Working Group is a coalition of labour, social action, community and church groups, which have come together to develop alternatives to the Common Sense Revolution and the Ontario Conservative government.

**GAY, LESBIAN, BISEXUAL, TRANSGENDERED/TRANSSEXUAL**

OFL Solidarity and Pride Committee:

Canadian Labour Congress (CLC)  
Canadian Union of Public Employees (CUPE)  
Elementary Teachers' Federation of Ontario (ETFO)  
Hotel Employees and Restaurant Employees (HERE)  
Office and Professional Employees Union (OPEIU)  
Ontario Public Service Employees Union (OPSEU)  
Public Service Alliance of Canada (PSAC)

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Service Employees International Union (SEIU)  
United Steelworkers of America (USWA)  
Coalition for Gay and Lesbian Rights (Ontario)  
Foundation for Equal Families

**HEALTH & SAFETY/WORKERS' COMPENSATION**

OFL Health and Safety Committee:

Amalgamated Transit Union (ATU)  
Communications, Energy and Paperworkers (CEP)  
Canadian Labour Congress (CLC)  
Canadian Union of Public Employees (CUPE)  
Canadian Union of Postal Workers (CUPW)  
International Association of Machinists (IAM)  
Ironworkers  
Industrial, Wood and Allied Workers - Canada (IWA-Canada)  
Office and Professional Employees International Union (OPEIU)  
Ontario Professional Fire Fighters Association (OPFFA)  
Ontario Public Service Employees Union (OPSEU)  
Public Service Alliance of Canada (PSAC)  
Service Employees International Union (SEIU)  
Sheet Metal Workers (SMW)  
United Food and Commercial Workers (UFCW)  
Union of Needletrades, Industrial and Textile Workers (UNITE)  
United Steelworkers of America (USWA)

The CareVan Project  
Industrial Accident Victims Group of Ontario  
Injured Workers' Consultants  
Ontario Network of Injured Worker Groups  
Toronto Workers' Health and Safety Legal Clinic  
Victims of Chemical Valley

OFL Workers' Compensation Committee:

Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers (BLE)  
Communications, Energy and Paperworkers (CEP)  
Canadian Labour Congress (CLC)  
Canadian Union of Public Employees (CUPE)  
Canadian Union of Postal Workers (CUPW)  
Hotel Employees and Restaurant Employees (HERE)  
International Association of Machinists (IAM)  
Ironworkers  
Industrial, Wood and Allied Workers - Canada (IWA-Canada)  
National Union of Public Employees (NUPGE)  
Ontario English Catholic Teachers' Federation (OECTA)  
Ontario Public Service Employees Union (OPSEU)

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Public Service Alliance of Canada (PSAC)  
Service Employees International Union (SEIU)  
Sheet Metal Workers (SMW)  
United Brotherhood of Carpenters and Joiners of America (UBCJA)  
United Food and Commercial Workers (UFCW)  
Union of Needletrades, Industrial and Textile Workers (UNITE)  
United Steelworkers of America (USWA)  
United Transportation Union (UTU)

### **HEALTH CARE**

OFL Health Care Committee:

Canadian Union of Public Employees (CUPE)  
Canadian Union of Postal Workers (CUPW)  
International Association of Machinists (IAM)  
Industrial, Wood and Allied Workers - Canada (IWA-Canada)  
Ontario Secondary School Teachers' Federation (OSSTF)  
Office and Professional Employees International Union (OPEIU)  
Ontario Public Service Employees Union (OPSEU)  
United Food and Commercial Workers (UFCW)

### **ONTARIO HEALTH COALITION (OHC)**

The Ontario Health Coalition is Ontario's most broadly representative voice for public health care policy. Its membership encompasses 300 member groups: community health coalitions, health care workers at all levels, unions, social development agencies, women's groups, seniors' groups, low income and homeless people's organizations, ethnic and multiracial minorities' groups, faith-based organizations and other citizens' organizations.

### **HOUSING & HOMELESSNESS**

Canadian Housing Federation (Ontario Division)  
Canadian Housing Forum, 2002  
Ontario Coalition for Social Justice

### **HUMAN RIGHTS**

OFL Human Rights Committee:

Canadian Labour Congress (CLC)  
Canadian Union of Public Employees (CUPE)  
Canadian Union of Postal Workers (CUPW)  
Hotel Employees and Restaurant Employees (HERE)  
International Association of Machinists (IAM)  
Ontario English Catholic Teachers' Federation (OECTA)  
Ontario Public Service Employees Union (OPSEU)

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United Food and Commercial Workers (UFCW)  
Union of Needletrades, Industrial and Textile Workers (UNITE)  
United Steelworkers of America (USWA)  
Coalition of Black Trade Unionists (CBTU)

**INCOME SECURITY**

Campaign 2000  
Canadian Pensioners Concerned/Alliance of Seniors to Protect Canada's Social Programs  
Income Security Legal Clinic  
Inter-Faith Social Assistance Reform Coalition  
Ontario Coalition for Social Justice (*The OCSJ is a coalition of provincial and national groups promoting social and economic justice in Ontario*).  
Ontario Social Safety NetWork  
Canadian Union of Public Employees (CUPE)  
Andy Mitchell

**LABOUR LEGISLATION**

OFL Labour Relations Committee:  
United Food and Commercial Workers (UFCW)  
Communications, Energy and Paperworkers (CEP)  
Canadian Union of Public Employees (CUPE)  
Canadian Union of Postal Workers (CUPW)  
Hotel Employees and Restaurant Employees (HERE)  
International Association of Machinists (IAM)  
Ironworkers  
Industrial, Wood and Allied Workers (IWA)  
Ontario English Catholic Teachers' Association (OECTA)  
Ontario Public Service Employees Union (OPSEU)  
Public Service Alliance of Canada (PSAC)  
Union of Needletrades, Industrial and Textile Employees (UNITE)  
United Steelworkers of America (USWA)

**LOCAL GOVERNMENT**

Ontario Coalition for Social Justice (OCSJ)  
Toronto and York Region Labour Council  
Canadian Union of Public Employees (CUPE)  
Canadian Union of Public Employees (CUPE 5167 Hamilton)  
Jane Karwat, Toronto Councillor David Miller's Executive Assistant

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## **PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES**

OFL Persons With Disabilities Committee:

- Communications, Energy and Paperworkers (CEP)
- Canadian Union of Public Employees (CUPE)
- Canadian Union of Postal Workers (CUPW)
- Ontario Public Service employees Union (OPSEU)
- Ontario Secondary School Teachers' Federation (OSSTF)
- Public Service Alliance of Canada (PSAC)

## **TRAINING & APPRENTICESHIPS**

- Sheet Metal Workers (SMW)
- Ontario Public Service Employees Union (OPSEU)
- Carpenters
- United Steelworkers of America (USWA)

## **VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN**

OFL Womens' Committee:

- Amalgamated Transit Union (ATU)
  - Communications, Energy and Paperworkers (CEP)
  - Canadian Union of Public Employees (CUPE)
  - Canadian Union of Postal Workers (CUPW)
  - Hotel Employees and Restaurant Employees (HERE)
  - International Association of Machinists (IAM)
  - Elementary Teachers' Federation of Ontario (ETFO)
  - Ironworkers
  - Industrial, Wood and Allied Workers - Canada (IWA-Canada)
  - Ontario English Catholic Teachers' Federation (OECTA)
  - Office & Professional Employees International Union (OPEIU)
  - Ontario Public Service Employees Union (OPSEU)
  - Public Service Alliance of Canada (PSAC)
  - United Food and Commercial Workers (UFCW)
  - Union of Needletrades, Industrial and Textile Workers (UNITE)
  - United Steelworkers of America (USWA)
- Older Women's Network
- Ontario Association of Interval & Transition Houses
  - Ontario Social Justice Network
  - Cross-Sectorial VAW Strategy Group
  - Ontario Coalition for Social Justice
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**WORKPLACE EQUALITY**

Equal Pay Coalition

OFL Women's Committee:

- Amalgamated Transit Union (ATU)
- Communications, Energy and Paperworkers (CEP)
- Canadian Union of Public Employees (CUPE)
- Canadian Union of Postal Workers (CUPW)
- Hotel Employees and Restaurant Employees (HERE)
- International Association of Machinists (IAM)
- Elementary Teachers' Federation of Ontario (ETFO)
- Ironworkers
- Industrial, Wood and Allied Workers - Canada (IWA-Canada)
- Ontario English Catholic Teachers' Federation (OECTA)
- Office & Professional Employees International Union (OPEIU)
- Ontario Public Service Employees Union (OPSEU)
- Public Service Alliance of Canada (PSAC)
- United Food and Commercial Workers (UFCW)
- Union of Needletrades, Industrial and Textile Workers (UNITE)
- United Steelworkers of America (USWA)

**YOUTH**

- United Food and Commercial Workers (UFCW)
  - Ontario Public Service Employees Union (OPSEU)
  - Canadian Union of Public Employees (CUPE)
  - Canadian Union of Postal Workers (CUPW)
  - Office and Professional Employees Union (OPEIU)
-

## 1. Arts, Heritage and Culture

The arts and cultural industry is the fourth largest sector in Ontario, and one of the fastest growing. It contributes billions of dollars to the provincial economy and generates thousands of jobs.

It is highly volatile, experiencing massive restructuring, downsizing, cutbacks, technological change, and intensive foreign competition. The situation is made worse by the erosion of public support for Canadian culture and the aggressive expansion of corporate cultural enterprises, primarily from the US. The result is a loss of jobs for Canadian artists and cultural workers and the possibility of the eventual loss of our unique and diverse Canadian culture and identity. Cutbacks to the CBC, TVOntario, the Ontario Arts Council and virtually every other arts organization in the province not only threaten our identity as a people, but also erode our political and social independence.

Despite the significant benefit of this sector to the economy, artists are among the lowest paid workers in the province. Even though they have high levels of education and years of training, annual incomes for artists remain on or below the poverty line. With average incomes between \$7,000 and \$15,000 a year from their artistic work, most artists supplement their incomes with other employment. They often spend over 50 percent of their income on housing and workspace, and are often forced to work in hazardous conditions because they cannot afford to comply with safety standards.

Most artists do not have adequate access to basic social benefits. Although many workers in the cultural industry belong to unions, most of their collective bargaining depends on voluntary recognition. As self-employed workers, most artists fall outside standard labour, health and safety, and workers' compensation legislation. They have limited access to public and private pensions and employment insurance.

### ***Recommendations for A People's Charter:***

- ***Enact status of the artist legislation.***
  - *This should recognize artists as workers, and bring them the security and benefits enjoyed by workers in other sectors. The right to organize, in spite of the special conditions created by the reality of multiple employers or contractors, must be part of this legislation. It must include guaranteed adequate health services, access to workers' compensation, pension benefits and income security.*
  - *Formal labour relations mechanisms for the arts sector must be included as a means through which artists can enforce the collection of copyright and other payments owed to them.*

- **Secure and adequate funding for arts, heritage and culture.**
  - *Reverse the damage inflicted by the massive cutbacks of recent years. Under- funding of the sector by government leads to over-reliance on corporate sponsorships, with resulting effects on content. In recent years, funding focused on endowments and capital projects at the expense of operational funding.*
  - *Long-term, stable funding must be restored with the overall objective of designating one percent of the provincial budget to arts, heritage and culture.*
  - *Develop public funding of community and labour arts programs in areas that increase the personal income of artists. Funding of human resources and operations, as well as administrative infrastructure and facilities, must be secure and stable.*
  - *Implement programs to meet artists' housing and workspace needs, and include these in public and co-op housing proposals.*
  - *The arms-length relationship between government and the arts organizations and councils it funds must be strengthened.*
  
- **Change to the provincial tax structure.**
  - *Introduce income support through tax measures to assist artists earning less than \$30,000 a year.*
  - *Implement tax incentives to encourage private sector support for the arts.*
  - *Develop a competitive tax policy to attract more film and video production to the province.*
  
- **Develop training opportunities for artists.**
  - *Recognize art as a legitimate job category by government and include it in job-training and retraining programs. Include artists in skills upgrading and similar programs, and establish a fund to support training initiatives in the sector.*
  - *These initiatives should include artist residencies, mentoring, and apprenticeships. Support for professional training programs for artists must be a priority.*
  - *Arts and cultural education must be included at all levels of the education system, including adult education programs. This should include community, working class and labour arts and culture.*



- **Democratize cultural institutions.**
  - *Ensure labour and community representation on the boards of cultural institutions and agencies and participate in programming decisions. Those who serve on these boards should be compensated for lost time from work.*
  - *Hiring, staffing, adjudication and funding practices must be inclusive. Systemic barriers to full access to cultural resources must be removed.*
  - *Entry fees to publicly-funded cultural institutions must be reduced or eliminated. Pay-what-you-can systems should be encouraged and the loss of earned revenues should be made up through increases in operating grants.*
  - *Regular ongoing inclusion of labour and community content and form must take place in the programming of all public cultural institutions.*
  
- **Include artists in the Occupational Health And Safety Act.**
  - *Most artists are self-employed and fall outside the provisions of this law. The Act and its regulations must be amended to encompass all disciplines within the arts sector.*
  - *Expand the scope of the Workplace Safety and Insurance Act to encompass the arts sector without affecting the employment status of artists. The application of the Act to the sector would take into consideration the unique working circumstances and compensation needs of artists in each discipline.*
  - *Access to specialized health services and facilities such as chiropractic services, massage therapy, specialized physiotherapy, etc., must be funded and made accessible to artists.*
  
- **Volunteers must not be used to replace regular full or part-time work in publicly-funded arts institutions.**
  - *The use of volunteers in the arts and cultural sectors is significant and has grown to the point where they equal more than 7,400 full-time, full-year jobs. Some forms of volunteerism can provide valuable participation by interested citizens. This should not be discouraged, but neither should it be allowed to displace regular workers. Training for volunteers must include workplace health and safety.*

- ***Foreign ownership and control must be limited.***
  - *The already high degree of concentration of ownership in the commercial cultural sector is increasing, and presents a direct threat to the democratic process. Canadian ownership and control must be secured, and public ownership of commercial cultural resources such as the CBC, NFB, and TVO must be protected.*
  - *The province has a responsibility to ensure Canadian majority ownership of cultural enterprises, aboriginal ownership of aboriginal cultural enterprises, and to support self-determination of specific cultural communities. The province should work with the federal government to ensure Canadian content is protected and promoted in all disciplines and sectors, and should support federal initiatives to promote cultural diversity.*

***Arts, Heritage and Culture***  
***Questions for Discussion***

1. **After bringing so many activists and organizations together to develop this section on Arts, Heritage and Culture, is there anything that should be added, refined or strengthened?**
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  2. **What would be your top three priority recommendations?**
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  3. **How can you use the recommendations and background information to bring about positive change in your community?**
-

## 2. Childcare

Childcare has experienced a surge of international attention in recent years as policy makers recognized that access to high quality "early childhood education and care" - as it is now commonly called - can strengthen the foundations of lifelong learning for all children.

An excellent comparative and analytical framework is the report, "*Starting Strong: Early Childhood Education and Care*", issued by the Paris-based Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). The OECD study identifies eight key elements of successful ECEC public policies. These predict whether high quality accessible ECEC services will be available in a jurisdiction. We can use these policy elements as a framework for examining the childcare situation in Ontario.

- **A systemic and integrated approach to policy development and implementation.**
    - In Ontario, the delivery of early childhood education and care is highly fragmented.
  
  - **A strong and equal partnership with the education system.**
    - There are no systems in place to blend childcare and the public education system. In the latter half of the 1990s, that relationship became increasingly strained.
  
  - **A universal approach to access, with particular attention to children in need of special support.**
    - Equitable access to childcare is absolutely non-existent in Ontario. Although studies show that regulated care is the choice of most parents, it remains available only to the "lucky" high-income earner or the very lucky low-income fee subsidy recipient.
  
  - **Substantial public investment in services and the infrastructure.**
    - While the Ontario government claims it is spending more on childcare than any previous government, analysis of provincial allocations for regulated childcare shows a reduction of almost \$100 million from 1995 to 2001 - the first reductions in childcare funding since World War II.
-

- **A participatory approach to quality improvement and assurance.**

- In 1996, the Government of Ontario released the findings of a year-long investigation into childcare. Ironically, it is titled, "*Improving Ontario's ChildCare System*".

**Recommendations included:**

- reducing staff/child ratios
- diluting staff qualifications
- diverting fee subsidies to unregulated programs
- permitting home childcare providers to care for two additional school-age children
- reducing requirements for facilities
- reducing licensing enforcements

- **Appropriate Training And Working Conditions For Staff In All Forms Of Provision.**

- Even though most early childhood educators in Ontario have post-secondary education, low wages in childcare mean some staff live close to, or in, poverty. They earn about the same as parking lot attendants.

- **Systematic attention to monitoring and data collection.**

- There is no current Ontario data available for use by the community.

- **A stable framework and long-term agenda for research and evaluation.**

- In Ontario throughout the past few years, government research has been conducted, publicized, and then ignored. The ability of non-governmental organizations to conduct their own research is hampered by funding cuts to their operating budgets.
-

**Recommendations for A People's Charter:**

*The government should use these policy elements as a starting point for rebuilding early childhood education and care in Ontario:*

- **A systemic and integrated approach to policy development and implementation.**
  - *Ontario must adopt a systematic and integrated approach to ECEC policy and service provision to move towards a system of seamless, inclusive services offering both care and education. We must move away from a targeted, subsidy-based system to a publicly-funded system.*
  
- **A strong and equal partnership with the education system.**
  - *Ontario must devise a service system based on the best available knowledge that makes it the foundation for lifelong learning. This system must integrate the current childcare system under the Ministry of Community and Social Services with kindergarten under the Ministry of Education and include a continuum of family support programs. An Ontario government could, with public consultation, choose among several options to implement this system.*
  
- **A universal approach to access, with particular attention to children in need of special support.**
  - *All children must have equal opportunities to attend quality childcare, regardless of family income, parental employment status, special educational needs or ethnic/language background.*
  - *Ontario must develop a multi-year plan reflecting the goal of universal access. It must move toward expansion of services to ensure every child has access to ECEC services. Programs must be structured to be sensitive to parental work, education and family needs.*

- **Substantial public investment in services and the infrastructure.**
  - Ontario must set a goal matching the European Union's spending one percent of GDP on ECEC services. The first step is for the government to immediately restore regulated childcare funding to 1995 levels. At the same time, it must take leadership with the federal government and at the national federal-provincial-territorial level, calling for a national policy framework for ECEC. The federal government must live up to its responsibilities and provide substantial funding for ECEC. Funding levels must increase annually within planned expansion until universal access is achieved.
- **A participatory approach to quality improvement and assurance with regulatory standards supported by coordinated investment.**
  - Ontario must strengthen its legislative, regulatory and consultative role to ensure best practices in ECEC programs become the norm. This must include participation of parents and other experts. A clear plan must be developed and implemented to ensure that Ontario's ECEC system becomes a high quality environment enhancing healthy development for all children. This requires that the physical and human environments for children are appropriately funded and sustainable.
- **Appropriate training and working conditions for staff in all forms of provision with strong staff training and fair working conditions across the sector.**
  - Ontario must immediately restore funding to achieve pay equity for ECEC teachers and undertake a full analysis of workforce issues including recruitment and retention, career laddering, enhanced training possibilities and gender issues.
- **Systematic attention to monitoring and data collection.**
  - Ontario must create a plan for monitoring, collecting and providing up-to-date, reliable and accurate information about ECEC throughout the province and adopt a sustainable long-term research agenda.

- ***A stable framework and long-term agenda for research as part of a continuous improvement process.***
  - *Ontario must remain at the forefront of new research. We must act on new research supporting the key elements of ECEC.*

*Each political party's election platform should:*

- ***Commit to fund research at both the government and NGO levels, and to share the results of the research with the community.***
- ***Recognize that ECEC is a public priority.***
- ***Acknowledge the public nature of ECEC and include a commitment to invest the necessary resources.***
- ***Support an integrated system providing seamless services that meet the needs of all families regardless of income, job status, or geography.***
- ***Commit to a systematic and planned approach with ongoing expansion towards the goal of universal access to services.***
- ***Commit to high quality ECEC for early childhood education.***
- ***Guarantee salary and benefit levels that accurately reflect the value and skills of those who work in ECEC.***

***Childcare  
Questions for Discussion***

- 1. After bringing so many activists and organizations together to develop this section on Childcare, is there anything that should be added, refined or strengthened?**
  - 2. What would be your top three priority recommendations?**
  - 3. How can you use the recommendations and background information to bring about positive change in your community?**
-

### 3. Education - K-12

Public education, including both public and separate schools and school boards, is a cornerstone of democracy. Our society relies on public education to ensure well-educated citizens. It must be accessible to all, regardless of sex, sexual orientation, gender identity/ expression, language, culture, ethnicity, race, income, religion or ability. No one should be turned away. Public education must meet the individual needs of all Ontario students, as well as the collective needs of society. Programs and services must be of high quality and prepare our youth for all aspects of adulthood – active participation in our democratic society, the world of work, parenthood, higher education, and life-long learning.

Public education in Ontario must benefit the individual and society as a whole. Education attainment must not be seen as an advantage provided to individuals. There is benefit to a co-operative approach, within classrooms and in developing programs and policies about public education. We must build on the existing strengths of the present system, enhancing what we have.

#### ***Recommendations for A People's Charter:***

*Public education in Ontario must be built on the following components:*

- ***Accountability that recognizes local decision-making.***
  - *An accountable system ensures all school boards meet the needs of the community, including appropriate community access to facilities. School councils have a role to play in our education system in an advisory role. An education system that is accountable to the students, parents, teachers, and citizens of Ontario has no room for teacher testing. Teachers and education workers believe in ongoing professional development determined by the needs of their job, not based on an arbitrarily imposed regimen.*
- ***Assessment based on the whole child.***
  - *Early intervention is a key concern, as are the services to address the development of the whole child. High-stakes testing, such as the grade 10 literacy tests, should be eliminated. The use of standardized tests would be minimized or eliminated. Test results will not be used to rank students, schools, teachers, or school boards.*

- **Restore bargaining rights that allow for full scope bargaining for all education workers.**
- **Class and school size must meet the needs of students, not the funding formula.**
  - *Class sizes, particularly in the primary grades, must be lower. Research shows there should be no more than 20 students in kindergarten through grade 3 classrooms.*
  - *Even though the benefits of small schools are becoming obvious, the current funding formula is moving in the direction of larger schools. This must be reversed.*
    - **Education programs must meet the diverse needs of Ontario.**
      - *Programs should include English as a Second Language (ESL), adult education, special needs education, and trades education.*
      - *Attention must be paid to the diverse needs of Ontario's communities, including heritage language, cultural diversity, and socioeconomic status. Programs must also include anti-violence, anti-racism, and anti-homophobia.*
      - *Full funding must be provided to ensure adequate and appropriate education support materials and resources for all students.*
      - *Intervention programs must be provided in every school to help students who are at risk or who have special needs.*
- **Educational support staff, programs, and services must be mandated and fully funded.**
  - *They must meet the needs of all students in every school. All school boards should provide professional and educational support personnel. Identification and intervention programs and services for students with special needs must be extended to ensure real access to education. Custodial services and maintenance, and the staff who provide them, are essential for all school board facilities and infrastructure.*

- **Privatization of any education services, programs, or facilities must not be tolerated.**
  - *The government must reverse the trend towards:*
    - *contracting out of services*
    - *commercialization of curriculum*
    - *corporate sponsorships*
    - *public-private partnerships*
    - *parental or corporate fundraising to cover essential services and programs*
    - *the inclusion of education in trade agreements*
  
- **Safety of all students and staff must be a prime concern.**
  - *Clean, safe, and healthy schools are an important aspect of our education system and must be properly funded.*
  - *Adequate funding for transportation must be improved. It is unacceptable for students to spend up to two hours each way on the school bus.*
  - *Programs to eliminate bullying must be seen as important and be fully funded.*
  
- **Funding must meet all the needs of a publicly-funded education system.**
  - *Funding cuts over the past six years must be restored. A new, stable model of funding must be developed and implemented.*
  - *Local school boards must be given limited taxation powers to help address local needs.*
  - *The tax credit for private schools must be eliminated immediately. Public funding must be for public schools, not for private institutions.*



## 4. Education - Post-Secondary

Post-secondary education should be a right for every person who wants it. Education allows the disadvantaged to gain the knowledge, skills, and experience to demand equality and social justice. People with a post-secondary degree or diploma tend to have above average employment opportunities and salaries.

Education is a right. Access to a post-secondary institution must be universal and equitable. A firm commitment from federal and provincial governments is required to maintain and enhance post-secondary education as a public institution under democratic public control. Quality standards must remain high, and there must be public accountability in its delivery.

### ***Recommendations for A People's Charter:***

*Post-secondary education in Ontario must be built on the following components:*

- ***Accessibility.***
  - *Access to a college or university education should be based on ability to learn, not ability to pay. The downloading of education costs through increasing tuition fees must be stopped. Escalating student debt must be eradicated. Tuition fees should be regulated, frozen and eventually eliminated.*
  - *The double cohort is an urgent problem. The government must commit adequate funding for all qualified students to have a space in the post-secondary system.*
- ***Reverse privatization and corporate influence over academic programs.***
  - *Private for-profit universities created under Bill 132 should be turned over to the public sector. All disciplines deserve equitable funding, whether or not they are directly connected to corporate interests.*
- ***Reverse the contracting out of post-secondary education support services jobs.***
  - *Library, custodial, maintenance, clerical and technical workers are an integral part of the post-secondary community. All new facilities and services on campuses should have adequate numbers of staff employed by the institution and covered by union contracts.*

- **Well-built facilities maintained by union labour and supported by public funding.**
  - Governments should not require institutions to seek private sector partners to build new facilities or expand existing ones.
  - Funding is required to complete work that has been deferred for years because of under-funding.
  
- **Academic Freedom.**
  - Corporate interests should not control research at universities. It is an essential independent right of academics in their search for truth, justice and knowledge in the interests of society at large.
  
- **Governance.**
  - All governing bodies in the education system should include representation from all sectors of the community.
  - Shared decision-making on education policy should be in effect to protect academic freedom, as well as accessible and affordable institutions.
  
- **All workers in the post-secondary sector deserve fair wages, good working conditions and job security.**
  
- **Funding.**
  - Adequate government funding levels are required for post-secondary education to reverse the trend of relying on student fees and corporate sponsors. Funds are needed to repair buildings so that working and learning conditions are healthy and safe. Funds are also needed to ensure high quality programs and adequate space for all qualified students in this period of increased enrollment to gain a post-secondary education.



## 5. Employment Standards

The Conservative government amended the *Employment Standards Act (ESA)* in 2001 to enable a 60-hour work week. For some, the work week keeps getting longer, leaving less time for family, friends and community activities. For many others working part-time or on contracts, it gets shorter.

Ontario should take the initiative similar to France and other European countries and legislate a 35-hour work week with no loss in pay. This would mean less time in the workplace for some and create new employment or additional hours for those who are currently underemployed or unemployed.

For decades, overtime has been mandated after 44 hours worked in a week. The recent amendments to the *Employment Standards Act (ESA)* allow it to be averaged over four weeks or 176 hours. This promotes long hours at less pay and erratic shifts.

At a minimum, Ontario should follow the lead of other provinces and legislate time and a half after 40 hours in one week. Limits on overtime hours in one year should also be established as a way of distributing work hours to others.

The minimum wage in Ontario has been frozen at \$6.85 for over six years! In this time, average rents have gone up over 11 percent. The cost of food and clothing has gone up over nine percent.

Statistics Canada calculates that a single person living in a big city needs to gross at least \$18,371 to live in reasonable standards. This means Ontario's minimum wage is about \$5,900 below the poverty level. To get to this line, a person would have to earn at least \$10 an hour for a regular 35-hour work week. Minimum wage laws should guarantee earnings above the poverty line.

In December 2001, Statistics Canada reported the average weekly earnings across the country were \$671.43. In Ontario, average earnings were slightly higher at \$717.07 or about \$18 per hour. The traditional position of the Ontario Federation of Labour is that the minimum wage should be set at 70 percent of the average. The minimum wage should be indexed to this level, or \$12.60 an hour based on current averages.

Vacation time in Ontario is extremely limited. The *Employment Standards Act* provides for the minimum of two weeks per year for unorganized workers who do not have a union collective agreement providing for longer vacations. Most European countries have legislated five weeks per year. The United Kingdom recently increased vacation time to four weeks per year.

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Rather than keep pace with these changes, Ontario is falling further behind. The amendments to the *Employment Standards Act* keep vacations at two weeks, but allow employers to ask you to agree to take these two weeks one day at a time rather than in weekly blocks.

At minimum, workers should be entitled to three weeks paid vacation after five years. At least two weeks of vacation should continue to be scheduled in blocks of at least one-week duration. Personal leave should be treated separately from paid vacations.

Workers have some rights under the *Employment Standards Act*. But they are rarely enforced. Nine out of ten workers filed claims for monies owing after they left their place of employment because they knew they could not enforce their rights while at work. They were afraid that they would be fired. But even when workers file successful claims for back payment, the orders issued for payment by the Ministry are rarely enforced.

There are new anti-reprisal protections in the *Employment Standards Act* that make it illegal for an employer to penalize or dismiss workers for trying to enforce their rights under the law. But this means nothing if it is not enforced. The government must educate workers about the new protection and actively pursue employers who penalize and fire workers for seeking their basic rights.

### ***Recommendations for A People's Charter:***

*The provincial government should:*

- ***Legislate a 35-hour work week with no loss in pay.***
  - ***Legislate overtime pay after 40 hours in one week.***
  - ***Set the minimum wage at \$12.60 an hour and index it to 70 percent of the provincial average.***
  - ***Set minimum paid vacation allowances at three weeks after five years, with a guarantee that at least two of these could be taken in weekly blocks.***
  - ***Educate workers about the anti-reprisals protection included in the Employment Standards Act.***
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### 6. Environment

Our goal is a healthy environment, with diverse and vibrant ecosystems. A healthy society needs a healthy economy that does not damage the environment. We can achieve this only when we commit to the following principles:

- protect and restore nature and conserve our natural resources, and
- minimize the pollution we dump into the air, land and water.

These principles of protecting and restoring nature, and preventing pollution must become part of our approach to the social and economic well being of the province. Without a healthy environment, we cannot hope to achieve other important goals for Ontario, such as:

- eliminate the environmental causes of illness;
- secure healthy, safe and sustainable sources of food and water;
- create an efficient economy based on the conservation and sustainable use of all natural resources and the development of renewable and recyclable resources;
- create healthy and resource-efficient communities, where the local environment contributes to the quality of life, and
- promote public involvement in democracy and community development.

Ontario is a rich province with an able and diverse population and enviable resources. It should have no difficulty ensuring the basic requirements for a healthy and rewarding life. It can offer plenty of opportunities for all its residents. Increasingly, however, the ecological and social foundations of Ontario are being strained. There is no more graphic example of this than the tragedy of Walkerton. Economic shortsightedness, combined with inattention to environmental quality and social justice, undermines our health, security and long-term economy. This is unnecessary and unforgivable. In recent years in Ontario, we have seen:

- dramatic reductions in, or the elimination of, environmental programs and major staff reductions by governments;
  - downloading responsibilities to lower levels of government without the necessary transfer of resources;
  - privatization, or proposed privatization, of public lands and services such as water, transit, garbage and electricity;
-

- growing reliance on voluntary action by industry to protect the environment, and
- increasing pressure to reduce the role of government and eliminate programs and regulations aimed at protecting and enhancing the well-being of people and their communities.

When moving toward more environmentally and socially sustainable livelihoods, workers and their communities must not bear a disproportionate cost of the transition.

### ***Recommendations for A People's Charter:***

- ***Just transition to a green economy.***
  - *We must practice the principles of “Just Transition” and allow workers and communities the right to choose both economic security and a healthy environment. This is a benefit to all, and a necessary condition for long-term job security. In the long run, environmental protection and rehabilitation produce more and safer jobs.*
- ***Protect the diversity of ecosystems and species.***
  - *Ontario must develop strategies to ensure the long-term health of species and ecosystems. This should include the active and full involvement of a wide range of people and their organizations. To be an inclusive and successful process it is critical that the opportunities are created for many perspectives to be heard and to be involved. Key actions include:*
    - *Developing a network of protected areas reflecting the diversity of Ontario's ecosystems and species. Such areas should be of sufficient size and integrity to allow natural processes to continue.*
    - *Addressing the economic and social concerns of workers, their communities and aboriginal people all of whom depend on the health of existing ecosystems.*
    - *Prohibiting the intentional introduction of non-native species, including products of biotechnology. Exceptions should only be permitted where it can be proven there will be no negative effect on biological diversity.*

- **Guarantee clean air and water.**
  - *Ontario needs to eliminate the major sources of contamination of our air and water, and set emission and treatment standards at levels based on the requirements for human health. In particular, Ontario should:*
    - *set air emission standards at levels protective of human health;*
    - *adopt a Safe Drinking Water Act, as drafted by the Canadian Environmental Law Association;*
    - *restore staffing levels and funding for the Ministry of Environment to pre-1995 levels;*
    - *preserve and enhance the role of the public sector in providing environmental regulation and services;*
    - *reject for-profit water utilities;*
    - *revitalize the Ontario Clean Water Agency, and*
    - *prevent the export of bulk water.*
  
- **Eliminate toxins.**
  - *revise standards for pesticides, as well as air and water pollutants to ensure that persistent toxins are targeted for virtual elimination from the environment and for zero discharge;*
  - *ban the use of pesticides for cosmetic purposes;*
  - *reduce household hazardous wastes and improve the standards for disposal, and*
  - *develop a comprehensive provincial policy for the clean-up of contaminated lands.*
  
- **Promote energy conservation and green sources of energy.**
  - *Energy conservation and renewable energy are important ways to minimize our environmental impact, build an efficient and competitive economy, and develop energy security for the province. Ontario can become a leader in energy conservation and green energy if it will:*
    - *adopt a Public Benefits Charge on electricity bills to fund programs to retrofit existing buildings to make them more energy efficient, to promote renewable energy research and development, and to subsidize low-income customers;*

- *promote energy efficiency in new buildings and plants by adopting R2000 and C2000 standards, improving energy efficiency standards for appliances, and offering tax incentives for efficient energy consumption;*
  - *adopt a standard requiring utilities to increase use of renewable energy sources from about 0.5 percent today to 10 percent by 2010 and 20 percent by 2020, and*
  - *commit to preserving and enhancing the leading role of the public sector in electricity generation and distribution.*
- **Create compact, healthy communities and stop urban sprawl.**
    - *Urban sprawl is one of the greatest environmental problems we face. It eats up valuable farmland and green space, increases air pollution and energy consumption, and results in poorly planned communities.*
    - *Ontario must act now to:*
      - *protect prime farmland and significant ecological systems such as wetlands or moraines;*
      - *revise the Planning Act to promote ecosystem-based planning, urban intensification and land use planning rules that support public transit;*
      - *shift tax and regulatory incentives from green field to brown field development, and*
      - *provide adequate funding for public transit by linking it to gasoline taxes.*
- **Promote an environmentally responsible, sustainable economy.**
    - *Extended Producer Responsibility must be at the core of waste management policies.*
    - *Ban the disposal of refillable, reusable, repairable, recyclable and compostable items from landfill sites.*
    - *Ensure that all workers have the right to refuse to pollute. Resources must be made available for workers and their organizations to develop training material to make them aware of this right and how it can best be used.*
    - *Involve workers and their communities in the development of “Just Transition” Programs when and where they are needed.*

- **Strengthen democracy.**

- *Promote public involvement in government processes and access to information.*
- *Involve workers and their communities in developing and implementing community economic development strategies.*
- *Support public participation in discussions and decisions related to the NAFTA, WTO, FTAA, and other agreements furthering an increasingly global economic system.*

***Environment***  
***Questions for Discussion***

1. **After bringing so many activists and organizations together to develop this section on Environment, is there anything that should be added, refined or strengthened?**
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  2. **What would be your top three priority recommendations?**
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  3. **How can you use the recommendations and background information to bring about positive change in your community?**
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## 7. Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual and Transgendered People

The underlining principle for any government must be to ensure members of all communities can participate fully in their communities. A cornerstone must be the recognition that individuals and families as an integral part of Ontario society. This is still not the daily reality for gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgendered people. Members of this community who have disabilities, are aboriginal, people of colour, youth, seniors, immigrants and/or poor, continue to face multiple levels of discrimination.

### ***Recommendations for A People's Charter:***

- ***Respect the fundamental human and Charter rights of gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgendered people.***
- ***Recognize, affirm and support gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgendered families.***
- ***Support and validate gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgendered youth.***
- ***Honour and respect gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgendered elders.***

Over the past decades the gay, lesbian and bisexual communities won major victories concerning individual rights and relationship recognition. These have been enshrined in laws and judgments affirming the right to full equality. Now the fight is on to win rights for people who identify as transgender, transsexual or intersex. These communities still face violence, discrimination and harassment.

Specific goals that will help realize equality are:

- Include broadly defined concepts of gender identity and gender expression as prohibited grounds of discrimination under the Human Rights Code.
- End the use of the “separate but equal” status implied by the term “same sex partnership” used in Ontario laws.
- End the two-tier system of relationship recognition itself, with its distinctions between married and common-law status.
- Launch a public education campaign about human rights, focusing on anti-harassment, anti-violence and anti-discrimination.

- Restore the *Employment Equity Act* and expand it to include lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgendered people.
- Police forces must work with the gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgendered communities to reach mutual understanding and support. They must provide training and education to help police officers do this work.
- School boards must be proactive in their responsibility to ensure the safety and well-being of gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgendered youth and the children of gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgendered parents.
- Health care providers must be responsive to the needs of these communities. This includes providing:
  - funded care for those requiring medical support for gender transition, and
  - appropriate and adequately funded care for people facing life-threatening illnesses such as AIDS and breast cancer.
- Gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgendered people should have the same family rights as heterosexuals.
  - people in gay and lesbian relationships should be able to adopt children;
  - same sex partners should be able to co-register as parents on their child's birth certificate;
  - estate and succession laws should recognize gay and lesbian common-law partnerships, and
  - the needs of the children of gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgendered parents in schools and the community must be recognized.

Gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgendered youth are among the most vulnerable members of our communities. They face hostility, rejection and violence. Their suicide rate is 14 times higher than other youths. Their experience in schools and society continue the harm.

- They need and deserve an end to homophobia, “gay bashing,” physical and emotional assaults, prejudice and bigotry.
  - They must be able to explore their identity without fear.
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- Our school curricula must include information about their identities, and the history of their communities.
  - They have a right to know about the struggles that have led to greater equality and to understand the work that lies ahead.
  - Most importantly, they have the right to receive the support and encouragement all young people are entitled to as they move towards self-actualization and adulthood.
    - Gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgendered and transsexual teachers must have the ability to act as positive role models.
  - There are many gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgendered senior citizens in Ontario. Respect and acknowledgment of those who suffered through years of oppression and bigotry, and whose struggles for liberation meant the difference between living in the closet and living in freedom is an essential part of equality. Quality elder care is an integral part of equality for gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgendered people.
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## 8. Health and Safety/Workers' Compensation

The occupational health and safety and workers' compensation systems have not provided proper protection for workers because pieces are missing from the equations. Pieces that labour has long fought to see implemented.

Since 1995, the situation has been made worse by attacks on both the legislated rights and protections, as well as on those institutions established to protect, educate or provide prevention or compensation related services to workers.

- Many have had their budgets cut or eliminated altogether;
- The Ministry of Labour's (MOL) budget went down by 46 percent;
- Inspectors are being told by their managers to do investigations over the phone, and
- The MOL occupational health laboratory has been privatized.

Meanwhile, downsizing and the inclusion of fees for service have created barriers for workers and families in accessing information, transcripts, files, etc.

In workers' compensation, the government has privatized the ability assessment, new vocation determinations and retraining of injured workers, leaving these workers to the mercy of private companies. Just as in Walkerton, the government abdicated its responsibility to protect the vulnerable.

The government has mastered the art of public relations, putting on a happy face while attacking and eroding the rights of workers. It expanded the programs, rewarding employers for hiding accidents and injuries. While some injury statistics go down, we know that many more of our members are working in pain. We also see more and more workers abandoning claims made to the Workplace Safety and Insurance Board (WSIB)<sup>1</sup> from 7 percent of claims filed in 1988 to 17.5 percent in 2001.

An average of 260 workplace deaths are recognized each year. Death by occupational disease continues to increase and is now approaching 60 percent of allowed fatal claims. Approximately 6,000 more workers die of occupational disease each year. They are not part of any official count. This does not include illness in family members affected by workplace substances brought home from the workplace.

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<sup>1</sup> The Workplace Safety and Insurance Board was formerly the Workers' Compensation Board. The WSIB is 100 percent funded by assessments on employer payrolls, not by tax dollars.

In addition to the human costs, unrecognized occupational diseases place a huge burden on our health care system.<sup>2</sup> Physicians have little training on the issue of occupational causes of illness and the current system actually encourages physicians not to report suspected occupationally-related illnesses.

Stress in the workplace is also getting worse whether it be from working faster and longer or from sexual, racial, homophobic or other types of harassment, thus creating a toxic work environment that is no less harmful to the bodies of workers than one filled with hazardous chemicals.

Young workers are especially vulnerable as they have little life experience to fall back on in determining if a situation is a hazard (what most adults refer to as common sense).

As bad as things are for many workers in Ontario, there are others who have it much worse. Thousands of workers are not covered by any health and safety or workers' compensation legislation.

Health and safety at work is a human right. Workers and their families have a right to expect that life, limb and health will not be sacrificed for a job. If workers are disabled, it is a matter of social justice that adequate compensation and job protection be provided.

In the 21<sup>st</sup> century, we have the ability to stop killing our sons and daughters and to stop making them sick. To make this a reality will take real prevention efforts not public relations. It will require political will, public support and political accountability.

### ***Recommendations for A People's Charter:***

*In the area of prevention, the government must:*

- ***Implement the regulatory and enforcement strategy laid out in "Labour's Program for an Effective Enforcement System".<sup>3</sup>***
- ***Restore onsite investigations by Ministry inspectors.***

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<sup>2</sup> The treatment costs of occupationally-related illnesses are paid for by the WSIB. All others are paid from tax dollars.

<sup>3</sup> Passed as part of labour's health, safety and compensation policy by the delegates at the 1997 Ontario Federation of Labour Convention, the program addresses ergonomics, violence, worker rights and covers enforcement strategies.

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- ***Provide sustainable funding to those agencies that enforce, educate or provide resources and services to workers in the area of prevention and compensation.***
  - ***Adopt the Precautionary Principle when regulating new chemicals.***
- ***Establish health-based exposure limits for chemical and physical agents with zero exposure to carcinogens and those that have reproductive effects.***
- ***Require mandatory substitution for those chemicals that have a less toxic alternative.***
- ***Require mandatory coroner inquests for all workplace deaths.***
- ***Establish mandatory training for employers/managers on their responsibilities under the Occupational Health and Safety Act.***
- ***Provide specific legislated training requirements for new or young workers.***
- ***Legislate working alone, violence and harassment protection.***
- ***Provide legal rights to protective reassignment for pregnant or nursing women.***
- ***Bring agricultural workers under the Health and Safety Act including migrant and seasonal workers.***

*In the area of compensation, the government must:*

- ***Establish the Workers' Compensation Bill of Rights.<sup>4</sup>***
- ***Extend coverage to all industry sectors.***
- ***Provide secondary victims' benefits.***
- ***Provide survivor benefits for families when no dependants exist.***
- ***Introduce Universal Disability Insurance (UDI).***

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<sup>4</sup> See footnote 3.

- ***Provide protective reassignment for workers with early symptoms of occupational health effects, ie. Hand-Arm Vibration Syndrome (HAVs) and chemical sensitization.***
- ***Ensure Ontario's workers' compensation system is employer funded but publicly controlled and administered.***
- ***independent institution dedicated to the investigation and research into occupational disease.***

*Issues that impact both areas include establishing:*

- ***A Royal Commission into occupational disease.***
- ***Government based occupational disease/cancer database (including parental occupational information for childhood cancers, birth defects), along with an independent institution dedicated to the investigation and research into occupational disease.***
  - ***Multi-language accessibility as well as no cost access to government transcripts or information.***
- ***Physician education of occupational disease and administrative changes to encourage reporting of suspected occupational illness.***

We have a right to safe and healthy workplaces and to expect that the government will do its job and properly enforce the law. Death and disablement should not be the sacrifice that workers make to earn a living.



## 9. Health Care

Full health care should encourage the prevention of illness. Important determinants of good health are a safe and secure job, a decent income, good housing, quality education, and a healthy environment. We need a full employment strategy and a strong social safety net. If we ignore these, we risk creating more illness and suffering, with resulting higher health care costs.

Important components of a health care system are long-term care, home care, pharmacare, and dental care programs. Medicare has saved us billions of dollars and improved our health. Expanding it into other vital areas will not only improve health, it will also make the system more efficient. All parts of the health care system must be comprehensive, universal, accessible, portable, publicly-run, and non-profit.

The five principles of the *Canada Health Act* secure a decent health care system for us all. We must not let them be eroded. These principles are:

- **Public Administration.**
    - The administration of the health care insurance plan of a province or territory must be carried out on a non-profit basis by a public authority.
  - **Comprehensiveness.**
    - All medically necessary services provided by hospitals and doctors must be insured.
  - **Universality.**
    - All insured persons in the province or territory must be entitled to public health insurance coverage on uniform terms and conditions.
  - **Portability.**
    - Coverage for insured services must be maintained when an insured person moves or travels within Canada or travels outside the country.
  - **Accessibility.**
    - Reasonable access by insured persons to medically necessary hospital and physician services must be unimpeded by financial or other barriers.
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**Recommendations for A People's Charter:**

• **Hospitals and long-term care.**

- *Encourage a stronger role for community hospitals, with greater emphasis on outreach and satellite facilities, and reverse all hospital and bed closures.*
- *Restore full funding for chronic care beds and facilities, and stop awarding of long-term care beds to private, for-profit companies.*
- *Stop all for-profit hospital projects, including public-private partnerships. Bring rehabilitation, laboratories, housekeeping, dietary, laundry, and administrative and other services back to the public sector. The sell-off of our public system must immediately stop. Cancer treatment should never be provided for profit. The private cancer clinic at Sunnybrook Hospital should be taken back from private hands.*
- *Increase staff levels in hospitals, acute care, long term and chronic care, and psychiatric facilities. Staffing levels must always ensure optimum patient care. Appropriate funding for wages must be set aside and wage parity should exist across the health care system.*
- *Increase funding for beds and programs for people with serious mental illness.*
- *Improve lengths of stay and care. No one should be forced to leave hospital before they are sufficiently recovered. The level of care should be based on patient need, not budget needs.*

• **Home care services.**

- *Develop community-based health care with democratically elected boards reflecting local constituencies, patients and health care staff. Decision-making should be open and transparent.*
- *Provide all home care services through one publicly-funded program in each community. This would deliver nursing, therapy, homemaking, personal support, care management, and placement services. This accessibility makes it easier for those who require home care. There will be no user fees for non-profit services.*
- *Increase integration of service, teamwork, and continuity of care while decreasing duplication and inefficiencies. There is more than enough need for home care to employ all those currently working in the system.*

- *Eliminate profit making from illness by:*
  - *stopping competitive bidding for long term and community health care;*
  - *stopping the divestment of public sector community health care staff, and*
  - *introducing direct provision of community health care by public sector organizations, accountable to the public. Successor rights must apply for affected workers.*
- **Primary health care.**
  - *Must be publicly funded, administered and delivered. Primary care practices must have a structure and culture that ensures democratically control through a community board with input by patients, providers and advocates.*
  - *Physician control of health care must end. Primary care organizations must draw on the skill of a range of health care providers: therapists, dentists, nutritionists, nurse practitioners, dental hygienists, doctors, RNs, RPNs, midwives, occupational therapists, optometrists, pharmacists, physiotherapists, laboratory technologists, and social workers. These providers comprise the primary health care system.*
  - *Services should be accessible 24 hours/day, 7 days/week, all year round. Doctors and all health care providers must be moved off fee-for-service payments and onto salaries, which should be the payment basis for all primary health care providers.*



## 10. Housing and Homelessness

The official indicators point to a serious, province-wide housing crisis. The face of the crisis looks different in Windsor, Belleville, North Bay or Guelph, but everywhere it has particular impact on women, aboriginal, youth, seniors and people with disabilities.

The roots of the crisis include the interrelated issues of affordability, supply and discrimination. The official Ontario rental vacancy rate is a critically low 1.7 percent. The real picture shows that the situation is much worse. For example, skyrocketing electricity rates and a deposit requirement of \$800 in Muskoka is driving tenants out of their homes.

A recent study submitted to Sault Ste. Marie City Council last January identifies 20 homeless people sleeping rough on the streets, 112 staying in homeless shelters, and nearly 20 percent of the entire population classified as “hidden homeless.” This includes “couch-surfers,” people in jails, and those crowded into substandard accommodation.

Counting the “hidden homeless” across the province creates a negative vacancy rate for Ontario. This gives a better picture of the true housing crisis. Average rents are increasing rapidly at double the rate of inflation or higher, but tenant incomes are stagnant or declining. In most parts of the province, welfare and other income programs, along with the minimum wage, do not provide enough income for tenants to afford their rent. Discrimination, either overt or structural, has a major impact for many in Ontario, especially aboriginal people, women, youth, families and children, people of colour, newcomers, people on social assistance and others.

Ontario is the richest province in one of the richest countries in the world. Our province has the financial resources to ensure every resident access to good quality, decent, safe and affordable housing. Spending on housing and income assistance is an investment in people. It creates valuable assets such as housing, and generates economic activity, including jobs and tax revenues. We join with our colleagues in the National Housing and Homelessness Network in calling for renewed federal housing and social spending.

Since 1995, the Ontario government has made deliberate choices to give priority to tax cuts that primarily benefit wealthy individuals and corporations, instead of social programs, including housing, that benefit the 4.5 million people living in renter households. Currently, the province spends about \$12 billion on tax cuts, yet spends zero dollars on new housing supply, and a decreasing amount on many other vital social programs. It explicitly relies on the private sector to deliver housing and other basic services.

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The federal government has abandoned its historic role in funding new housing and other social programs. Private developers and landlords have failed over the past six years to deliver the housing that people need. This experiment has failed and the signs of the failure are in the human and economic costs of the province-wide housing crisis. Contrary to the provincial government's promise of 15,000 new units annually, the actual delivery has been less than 2,000. Most of these are not affordable. This is the same provincial government that introduced major changes weakening tenant protection laws.

There is a history of success in addressing housing needs in Ontario. We don't lack solutions, but we have a critical lack of political will, and the proper allocation of government resources, to apply them. For instance, aboriginal housing providers effectively manage more than 2,000 urban units. But provincial government decisions, including the cancellation of new housing supply programs in 1995 and cuts to various services, have disrupted or destroyed a valuable community infrastructure.

### ***Recommendations for A People's Charter:***

*The provincial government must take immediate and effective action on the following points:*

- ***New supply.***
  - *The Ontario Ministry of Finance's "mid-range" scenario projects the need for an additional 18,400 new units annually. The province must fund new supply to meet this projection. The first priority should be households that need it the most.*
    - *Funding for new social housing supply should be conditional on non-discriminatory rental practices. The stock should remain affordable.*
    - *A fully funded program to create 18,400 units would cost about \$900 million annually. A full range of housing options is needed in all parts of the province, including emergency shelters, transitional housing, supportive housing for tenants with special needs and permanent housing.*
    - *The emphasis must be on long-term, social housing.*
- ***Aboriginal control of aboriginal housing.***
  - *The approximately 2,000 off-reserve aboriginal housing units in Ontario fall well short of the need. Aboriginal people represent a disproportionately large number of homeless people. Any new supply must include a targeted component to create aboriginal housing under aboriginal control.*

- **Housing for northern communities.**
  - *Government statistics often ignore northern areas because the populations are below survey thresholds. Northern, rural and remote communities lack adequate funding for services and social housing. Income security issues are particularly important in Northern Ontario. Access to government services, including the Ontario Rental Housing Tribunal, is severely limited.*
  
- **Adequate standard of living.**
  - *All Ontarians have the right to an adequate standard of living. This includes the right to a decent wage. Those who are unable to work have the right to adequate support, including social assistance and other income assistance programs. The government must implement a minimum annual income for all Ontarians reflecting the real cost of housing, food and other necessities.*
  
- **End discrimination in housing.**
  - *Access to good quality affordable housing is a basic human right. Cornerstones of the right to housing are economic security and the right to secure tenure. The Ontario Human Rights Code and principles of non-discrimination and equality must be upheld in the provision of all types of housing.*
  
- **Effective rent control and tenant protection.**
  - *The new system of rent regulation introduced in 1998 failed to protect tenants.*
    - *Rent increases in recent years increased at more than double the rate of inflation.*
    - *Annual average increases have been above the rent control guideline.*
  - *Full rent controls must be re-established.*
    - *The Ontario Rental Housing Tribunal ordered 116,605 renter households to be evicted without a hearing since June of 1998.*
      - *The so-called Tenant Protection Act must be replaced with a law that actually protects tenants and provides for a fair process with proper notification and adequate timelines.*

- **Expand existing supply.**
  - *The Ontario government abolished the Rental Housing Protection Act in 1998. Since then, there has been a big increase in the demolition and conversion of affordable rental housing, leading to a net loss of rental stock in some communities.*
  - *Declining property standards and lack of effective enforcement in many communities led to substandard conditions in existing units. Despite netting hundreds of millions in rent increases annually, landlords failed to invest in maintaining rental buildings.*
  - *The government has attempted to sell social housing and reduce the level of rent-geared-to-income subsidies, which also threatens existing supply.*
  
- **Control utility rates and other costs.**
  - *Skyrocketing utility rates, including electricity, water and sewer charges, are creating serious financial distress for many tenants, forcing some from their homes.*
  - *The privatization of Ontario Hydro will inevitably bring cost increases and add to this burden.*
  - *Other costs, including growing child care fees, add to this misery.*
  
- **Provision of adequate funding.**
  - *Municipalities have been saddled with the cost of provincial social housing programs. Funding this and other income-support programs from property taxes is bad public policy. Senior levels of government should either resume funding these programs or provide municipalities with the appropriate taxing powers.*
  
- **Stop criminalizing the poor.**
  - *There are already too many homeless people crowded into the province's jails. There must be no more criminalizing of poor and homeless people that force more of them into jails. There must be a commitment to decrease current levels of imprisonment. Continued over-incarceration and unnecessary short-term sentencing creates more homelessness and wastes money that should be spent on affordable housing, social programs, prevention programs and alternatives to prison.*
  - *All correctional facilities must remain in, or be returned to, the public sector.*

***Housing and Homelessness  
Questions for Discussion***

1. **After bringing so many activists and organizations together to develop this section on Housing and Homelessness, is there anything that should be added, refined or strengthened?**
  2. **What would be your top three priority recommendations?**
  3. **How can you use the recommendations and background information to bring about positive change in your community?**
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## 11. Human Rights

*“ . . . recognition of the inherent dignity and of the equal and inalienable rights of all members of the human family is the foundation of freedom, justice and peace in the world . . . ”*

*Preamble to the U.N. Universal Declaration of Human Rights, 1948.*

Equality of human dignity and freedom from discrimination are fundamental rights established in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and guaranteed in the Canadian Charter of Rights. All Canadians are entitled to these rights.

This principle and the solidarity of working people leads the labour movement in Ontario to continue its efforts to ensure that every worker is treated fairly and has access to training and promotional opportunities without discrimination of any form as prohibited under the Canadian Human Rights Code and the Ontario Human Rights Code.

While much of the progress in the area of human rights is a direct result of the efforts of the labour movement, and while unions will continue to fight for better working conditions for all workers, our efforts are not enough. The protection of human rights cannot be left to collective bargaining. Human rights language in collective agreements will not eradicate the systemic discrimination that members of marginalized groups encounter in employment.

The inherent right of human beings to be free from discrimination must be protected by enforceable legislation. A responsible Government must ensure that all workers, in particular, workers in non-union workplaces who do not have the protection of a collective agreement, are free from discrimination - not only in the workplace, but in society generally.

More than fifty years after the adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights by the General Assembly of the United Nations, there is no absence of evidence that many people in Ontario continue to experience discrimination, especially in employment.

Over the years, several studies have verified the discriminatory practices aboriginal people, people with disabilities, people of colour and women experience not only when seeking employment, but also after they are hired. Most comprehensive was the 1989 Abella Royal Commission on Employment Equity. For people of colour, the impact of systemic discrimination in employment continues to be pervasive. In the early 1990s, the Stephen Lewis Report identified “anti-black” racism as a specific form of discrimination.

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A report by the City of Toronto's Access & Equity Unit, "*Ethno-Cultural Inequality in Toronto: Analysis of the 1996 Census*", showed unemployment rates at more than 40 percent for black groups while for Europeans it was under 6 percent. The 2001 Galabuzi report, "*Canada's Creeping Economic Apartheid*", indicated that the inequality was increasing.

A look around in any city tells us that Canadians come from every country of the world. According to the most recent census, Canada continues to rely on immigration for population growth. Yet while we encourage immigration of educated and highly skilled workers, we ignore the racism and discrimination these new Canadians face when they get here.

Recently, a study based on the 1996 census by sociologist Jeffrey Reitz found that, "*discrimination against immigrants is creating a brain waste that costs Canada's economy up to \$15 billion a year.*" Even with comparable education and skills, immigrants are paid less than Canadian-born workers. This study also showed that Canadian-born racial minorities are also paid less with the shortfall about the same for blacks born in Canada and black immigrants.

### ***Recommendations for A People's Charter:***

*If our goal is to work for a society based on justice and equality, a society that values the inherent right of people to a decent job, education, health care, affordable housing, worker protection laws and social justice then we must support legislation and the enforcement of human rights remedies for all forms of discrimination in employment.*

- ***Enforcement of Human Rights in Ontario.***
  - ***Legislation to ensure workplace equality for aboriginal people, people with disabilities, people of colour and women.***
  - ***Resources to strengthen the Ontario Human Rights Commission, with a functioning race-relations department.***
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- ***The Human Rights Commission must be pro-active in enforcing the Human Rights Code. A case-by-case approach will not remedy systemic discrimination.***
- ***Amendment of the Code to allow third party complaints.***
- ***Complainants must be able to file claims and have them processed in a timely manner.***
  - ***A significant increase of the amount of general damages for pain and suffering.***

***Human Rights  
Questions for Discussion***

- 1. After bringing so many activists and organizations together to develop this section on Human Rights, is there anything that should be added, refined or strengthened?**
  - 2. What would be your top three priority recommendations?**
  - 3. How can you use the recommendations and background information to bring about positive change in your community?**
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## 12. Income Security

It is necessary and possible to create a model for income security that reflects the needs of Ontarians and their communities. It would reflect a healthy labour market and be seen as a vital component of a larger social safety net. A starting point would accept the fact that all Ontarians, particularly those who use and provide needed services, must be involved in the process of developing and implementing the model.

The new model should be based on principles such as universality, accessibility, comprehensiveness, accountability and democratization, preventive care and quality public services provided by unionized public sector workers. There are a number of interrelated components in a model for income security.

- **Labour market.**
    - There must be a range of quality and accessible programs encouraging the maintenance and creation of good jobs with decent wages, benefits and working conditions. Government policies must provide workers with legislated protection and the means to improve conditions in their workplaces such as:
      - Improving minimum wage levels to ensure that workers can earn above the poverty line.
      - Improvements to the *Employment Standards Act* and the *Ontario Labour Relations Act*.
  - **Public/community services.**
    - There must be a range of quality and accessible programs benefiting the community such as:
      - child care
      - education
      - training
      - health care
      - housing
  - **By supporting increased labour market participation, government can improve the quality of life in the community for those who use public services, and provide quality employment for those who provide the services.**
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- **Government income security programs.**
  - Most Ontarians will need some assistance at some point in their lives to deal with such contingencies as unemployment, inadequate income, disability and retirement. There must be a range of quality and accessible programs to meet this need.

The present system is not working and must be replaced. Its inadequacies were exacerbated by the ideological agenda of the Conservative government in Ontario since 1995. This agenda has been widely criticized and challenged by many Ontarians. Similar criticism has been heard across Canada and internationally through reports developed by such groups as the United Nations Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights.

Most workers have a fairly simple labour market strategy. It is to get into the paid work force and stay there. This will bring them the quality of life they desire for themselves, their families and their communities. Since 1995, the Ontario government has impeded this strategy by repealing legislation such as Employment Equity that assisted members of targeted groups to secure decent jobs at decent pay. Without this legislation, women, visible minorities, aboriginals, gays, lesbians, bisexual and transgendered people and persons with disabilities face ongoing struggles to gain and maintain a presence in the labour force. The government also weakened the *Employment Standards Act* and the *Labour Relations Act*, two pieces of legislation that provide workers with minimum protection at work and a way to collectively improve conditions in their workplaces.

The world of paid work is undergoing tremendous change. Workers everywhere face pressure to adapt to a globalized economy where employers restructure their organizations, processes and workplaces and where governments abdicate their responsibility to citizens in the name of economic realism and competitiveness.

Full-time employment is often replaced by the growth of part-time, contract, temporary and self-employed work. This type of work is often termed “non-standard” work or “contingency” work, reflecting its insecure, temporary nature. For too many Ontarians, the result is poverty and little real access to resources or opportunities to reverse or improve their situation. This is especially true for women, visible minorities, aboriginals, gays, lesbians, bisexual and transgendered people and persons with disabilities. Poverty touches the lives of many people, not just a few. Between 1993-1998, for example, one in five people in Ontario experienced poverty at some point. For 60 percent of them, their spell of poverty lasted more than one year. Income security as part of a social safety net should be seen as vital for social stability, as an investment in the future, not a “drain” of resources.

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Since 1995, there has been a deliberate and ideologically driven attack by the Conservative government on the users and providers of programs and services. They have engaged in a deliberate ongoing strategy of using administrative and legislative means to deny or reduce benefits. They have also stifled accessibility to policy development and implementation. Meaningful consultations only involve those perceived as friends of the Conservative party. This attack has been aided by the fact that in the mid-1990s, the federal government abandoned the concept of national standards in social programs when the *Canada Assistance Plan (CAP)* was replaced by the *Canada Health and Social Transfer Act (CHST)*.

The Conservatives have employed a variety of other tactics to continue their attack on Ontarians in need. Rather than use the Federal National Child Tax Benefit to assist children in Ontario, it is deducted from social assistance cheques in this province. This action was motivated by their desire to build political support by “protecting” taxpayers, who they perceive as their supporters, from the “undeserving” poor, who they perceive as draining Ontario’s resources, and by engaging in a political fight with the federal government.

Study after study shows that high quality childcare is a good economic investment. Yet spending on regulated childcare decreased by 15 percent since 1995, leaving the majority of families in this province without the option of choosing high quality, safe and developmentally enriching early childhood education and care (ECEC) for their children.

The Conservatives have no desire to be involved in housing, preferring it to be dealt with by the private sector. This is another attack on Ontarians in need. For social assistance recipients, the cost of housing dominates their budget. The cost of rent has been rising faster than other prices. Between 1996 and 2001, general prices went up approximately 10 percent. In large urban centers rents increased much faster. For example, the average rent for a bachelor apartment for social assistance recipients in Toronto increased 28 percent. In Ottawa, it went up 29 percent, in Hamilton 16 percent and in Windsor 18 percent. Raising the shelter allowance to Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC) rental levels would make the shelter allowance reflect the real cost of housing.

Income security for unemployed Ontarians can take a number of forms. At the provincial level, there is:

- The Social Assistance Program now called Ontario Works;
  - The Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP), and
  - Workers' Compensation from the Workplace Safety and Insurance Board (WSIB).
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At the federal level there is:

- Employment Insurance (EI);
- Canada Pension Plan (CPP), and
- Old Age Security (OAS).

The Ontario government could be a strong voice advocating strengthening these programs, especially EI, to ensure that Ontarians can access them in their time of need. Instead, Ontarians in need are portrayed as undeserving of support from the wider community.

For example, social assistance was slashed by 21.6 percent within two months of the 1995 election. Since these cuts, inflation continued to erode the purchasing power provided by benefits. By 2001, the purchasing power of a single person declined by 31 percent. For a single parent with one child, it went down by nearly 35 percent. Ontarians with disabilities, who were spared the general welfare cuts, saw a 13 percent decrease in their purchasing power. The introduction of Workfare was another opportunity to demonize Ontarians who were unable to defend themselves.

Access to the Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP) is difficult. Many applicants are initially denied benefits. The appeal process often results in people giving up and accepting lower benefits from Ontario Works. The persons with disabilities community roundly criticized this program.

Bill 99 “reforms” of the workers’ compensation system lowered payments to injured workers, while also lowering employer assessment levels. This is another example of the Conservative attack on Ontarians in need. They legislated an end to claims for work-related stress at the same time as workplaces restructured in a way where workload and stress are skyrocketing. The net effect is many workers are left without compensation while they are no longer able to work.

The Conservative tactic of downloading responsibilities to other levels of government without providing the resources to handle them has resulted in the erosion of needed social programs. The increasing use of the private sector to develop and implement programs has financially benefited the friends of the Conservative government but has done little for the users or providers of these services.

Even the Provincial Auditor recognized the major fiasco resulting from the government’s contract with Andersen Consulting, which was hired to overhaul the welfare system. Through contracts such as this, the Tories left us with an income support system in which government workers are not only overloaded, but cannot even make decisions in the best interests of their clients. Human contact in the system is becoming a thing of the past.

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These days, cold-hearted computer programs decide to discontinue or disallow benefits based on hard and fast formulas. It used to be that social workers helped people in economic crisis. Nowadays, call centres ignore them.

### ***Recommendations for A People's Charter:***

*A new model is needed for income security. Many Ontarians and their organizations could play a positive role in developing and implementing such a system. Until we have one, there are policy changes that can be undertaken by the Ontario government. These would have an immediate benefit for many Ontarians and their communities.*

- ***Labour market.***
    - *Increase the minimum wage and reform the Employment Standards Act and the Labour Relations Act.*
    - *Replace workfare with a program that allows Ontarians to have a real opportunity to plan for their future, and access to resources to allow them to attain their goals.*
    - *Restore full rights to persons in receipt of social assistance, and rip up Bill 22, which removed employment and union rights.*
  
  - ***Public/community services.***
    - *Implement a universal system of high quality, publicly-funded, not-for-profit childcare in Ontario, an integrated system providing seamless services that meet the needs of all families, regardless of income, job status or geography.*
    - *End the practice of deducting the amount families receive from the National Child Tax Benefits from their social assistance cheque.*
    - *Increase the shelter allowance in social assistance legislation to better reflect the regional cost of housing.*
    - *End punitive and demeaning mandatory drug testing plans for persons in receipt of social assistance.*
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- **Government income security programs.**
  - *Restore the social assistance cutbacks imposed in 1995 and index benefits to inflation.*
  - *Redesign a federally administered, publicly delivered income security system that gives everyone access to a decent income and services without the inequities and anomalies resulting from conflicting programs.*
  - *End discrimination against persons with disabilities and review applications for benefits under the Ontario Disability Support Act using definitions in line with human rights developments.*
  - *End punitive rules that disallow persons with disabilities from partial participation in the workforce while collecting benefits under the Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP).*
  - *Restore rights for work related stress claims under workers' compensation.*



### 13. Labour Legislation

Working people have a fundamental right to secure employment. They have a right to decent pay and working conditions. Work is an integral part of a healthy and satisfying life. Everyone deserves dignity, respect and security at work. Whether that work takes us into a classroom, a factory, a hospital, a retail store or our own homes, the basic rights remain the same. Everyone deserves to be treated with dignity and respect.

In the years since June 1995, there has been a steady erosion of this right in Ontario. Too many Ontario workers have seen their job security slip away. Our right to control our work environment through collective action has been under steady attack.

Unions play an essential role in society. Working people have a right to join them and act collectively to improve their standard of living. Governments are not innocent bystanders in this. They have an obligation to ensure that workers have both the right and the ability to take advantage of union membership. Government must provide protection against unfair labour practices.

The recent trend by our provincial government has been to intervene directly on behalf of those employers who would take advantage of these unfair practices. This must be reversed and the government must take an active role in setting standards of fairness, justice and dignity. It must be willing to enforce workers' rights.

#### ***Recommendations for A People's Charter:***

*We call on the provincial government to:*

- ***Recognize that everyone has the democratic right to join a union of their choice, free from employer interference and abuse.***
- ***Give the Labour Relations Board the power to deal with bosses who break the law when workers attempt to organize.***
- ***Modernize the Labour Relations Act to give "new economy" workers - from contract employees in the tech sector to home workers in the garment industry - the same right to organize as everyone else.***
- ***Abolish all exclusions in the law that shut the door on collective bargaining for certain groups of employees.***

- ***Implement the Supreme Court's decision on agricultural workers without delay, giving them the unfettered right to collective bargaining.***
- ***Make it mandatory for non-unionized employers to post and provide employees with information on the legal steps that need to be undertaken to unionize.***
- ***Remove the obligation for employers to post de-unionization material in unionized workplaces.***
- ***Respect free collective bargaining for public sector employees rather than fixing collective bargaining by reducing the transfer of funds, legislating "no deficit" laws, or otherwise intervening in the arbitration process.***
- ***Reinstate the anti-scab laws.***
- ***Reinstate equality of successor rights for Crown employees.***
- ***Refuse to provide tax dollars to employers who use sweatshop practices.***
- ***Enact a law barring suppliers who break minimum employment standards from receiving government contracts.***
- ***Restore all other NDP labour law reforms repealed by the Conservative government in 1995.***



### 14. Local Government

People want their communities to have effective local governments with democratic processes enabling them to identify and implement a progressive inclusive agenda. This should reflect the vibrancy of the community, the diversity of its members and provide opportunities for employment and education. Local governments must be funded properly to serve the needs of the community.

Local governments play an important role. They can lead by example in developing initiatives to create and maintain quality employment in the local economy. Initiatives should reflect a commitment to fair wages and benefits, safe workplaces, respect for the environment and equity for all citizens. Programs and services of local government should reflect community needs. These are best served when all levels of government have a clear understanding of their respective responsibilities and how they can work together for the betterment of the whole community.

Ontario is largely an urban province. Most Ontarians live and work in cities and towns. This generates an enviable level of wealth and quality of life for some, and a growing host of problems for others. A lot of these concerns can be addressed locally. All it takes is for local government to work with the community groups and with other levels of government. This is not happening though. The powers and resources of local governments are limited and dependent on provincial legislation. The provincial government is not interested in increasing these resources and funds. In fact, it is relieving the load on itself by downloading responsibilities to municipalities.

Since 1995, the provincial government has used its power to implement a divisive and ideologically driven agenda. They forced downloading, amalgamations and mergers, disrupting long-standing ways of operating at the local level. Many local politicians who support the Tory agenda have little appreciation of the importance of programs and services or of the public sector workers who deliver them. Instead, they evade their responsibility by turning over assets and responsibilities to their friends in the private sector.

Ontarians must understand that the range of economic, social, equity, health and environmental concerns affect the entire community. To address these concerns, we need stronger, more effective local governments. There should be a commitment to these principles:

- Political responsibility and accountability by the appropriate elected officials and staff;
  - Transparent, democratic and inclusive policy development and implementation;
  - Health and safety for providers and users of social services as well as the wider population, and
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- Equitable distribution of quality services and resources.

The application of such principles provides the tools to assess policy development and implementation at the local level and to challenge decisions felt to be wanting. The wider community has every right to be involved in issues of concern to them. Public services are created and maintained to benefit everyone. As such, they are an area where everyone is equal, regardless of private wealth. It should be realized that through their education/action issue campaigns and the collective bargaining process, public sector workers play the role of guardians of the public trust regarding these services.

### ***Recommendations for A People's Charter:***

*To achieve a new deal for Ontario's local governments, there must be a commitment at the provincial and federal level to:*

- ***Make the existing legislative framework more effective for dealing with governance, revenue generation and sharing for local governments. There must be an open and extensive public involvement to determine how and what resources are needed for local government to best address the needs and aspirations of Ontarians in a manner that reflects the diversity of their communities.***
  - ***A "lead by positive example" model for local government in policy development and implementation.***
  - ***Policies that create and maintain quality employment, fair wages and benefits, safe workplaces, respect for the environment and equity for all citizens.***
  - ***Policies that create and maintain a social safety net through which public sector workers deliver services when and where needed. Providers and users of services must be involved in policy development, implementation and review.***
  - ***Making all programs, services and facilities in the community accessible to everyone.***
  - ***Work together to ensure the presence of a strong, viable, accessible public transit, funded by linking funding to the gasoline tax.***
  - ***Environmentally sustainable planning and activities.***
  - ***Preserving and enhancing the leading role of the public sector in water and sewage treatment, and electricity generation and distribution.***
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### 15. Pay Equity

Guiding principles of pay equity:

- Pay equality is a basic human right;
- Ensure proactive obligation to achieve and maintain pay equity;
- Non-unionized women must be guaranteed access to pay equity;
- Pay equity laws should include redress for race-based wage inequities;
- Pay equity enforcement must be strengthened and funded;
- Public sector pay equity adjustments must be fully funded;
- Employment equity laws are also necessary.

Legislated pay equity is essential to ending systemic wage discrimination. It is a basic human right which, according to the Supreme Court of Canada, is on par with other constitutional rights. Human rights are not optional expenditures to be disregarded under the guise of financial restraint.

Canada is bound by international obligations committing all provinces to take proactive and effective legislative steps to achieve pay equity for women. Through the United Nations, several governments – including Canada – agreed to close wage gaps by strengthening pay equity laws. This was to be a priority step on the road to women's equality. It hasn't happened.

Real pay equity is not even close to reality in Ontario despite the *Pay Equity Act*. According to Pay Equity Commission surveys, many Ontario employers, particularly smaller businesses, still pay discriminatory wages. Recent studies show women are still paid considerably less than men, even though their education, training and skills are comparable to those of male workers. Women continue to be segregated into lower paying, less prestigious occupations.

Some women, especially those who are unionized, received pay equity adjustments. Some of these brought substantial raises in pay, phased-in over several years. Unfortunately, these are still the exception rather than the rule. Most women have not seen any pay equity adjustments.

The *Act* provides that pay equity, once achieved, must be maintained to ensure the wage gap does not re-emerge.

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Unorganized women are the most economically disadvantaged and underpaid in the workforce. Without a union to enforce their rights, they worry about reprisals if they seek their rights. This should not be a concern. The fact that it is one shows how badly the *Act* is enforced. It requires employers to achieve pay equity regardless of whether an individual complaint had been lodged. Non-unionized women need strong support and assistance if they are to achieve pay equity. But after 1996, they were denied access to the Pay Equity Advocacy and Legal Clinic because the government stopped its funding. Currently, the Pay Equity Office is the only source of information and assistance for these women. Stable funding for the Clinic must be restored so that all unorganized women can respond to the legal arguments of their employer's lawyers.

As with gender, race and ethnicity, combined with occupational segregation, is a large factor contributing to pay inequity. Certain jobs are filled primarily by racial minorities and are underpaid, relative to comparable work performed by white workers. People of colour are generally subjected to lower pay, lower status and an under-valuing of their work. Several Canadian research studies show the extent of this. The May 2001 Centre for Social Justice Study, "*Canada's Creeping Economic Apartheid*" and the 2000 City of Toronto study based on the 1996 Census are two good examples. They showed that workers of colour earn lower wages than white workers of similar education and experience.

Ontario needs an effective and fully resourced Pay Equity Commission and Tribunal. Specialized, independent and expert enforcement are crucial features of this province's internationally recognized pay equity legislation. The Pay Equity Office and the Pay Equity Hearings Tribunal played a key role in establishing and maintaining pay equity in Ontario. They are no longer as effective as they should be. They were targeted for substantial cutbacks which eroded their enforcement abilities.

The Pay Equity Office can provide valuable and affordable education and advice to employers, unions and workers. It helps avoid unnecessary costs and reduces the time needed to achieve compliance. It encourages settlement rather than expensive litigation. Pay equity can only be ensured when strong enforcement mechanisms exist to back up the self-managed system, and when assistance is provided to enforce rights, particularly among vulnerable non-unionized women. The Information Hot Line is important for small employers and workers to get free advice and information to help them achieve equity. The Pay Equity Tribunal enforces the *Act* through mediation and adjudication. Its specialized expertise is not found at other tribunals or boards of arbitrations and has been recognized by the Courts.

Adequate resources must be committed to the Commission and Tribunal to ensure that pay equity is accessible and enforceable in a meaningful way. Enforcement procedures must be strengthened. There should be no move to unburden employers by leaving pay equity to "natural market forces" rather than to the force of law. Such a weakening will lead to rewarding negligent employers and penalizing law-abiding ones. It would hurt those women who stand to lose the pay equity gains they have made and the many Ontario women who have yet to see discrimination removed from their pay cheques.

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Public services must be provided at non-discriminatory wages. The wage gap can't be closed without full funding. Yet In 1995 a \$500 million cap was imposed even though the government knew that \$1 billion was needed to pay all the current and future adjustments. Mr. Justice O'Leary noted in the successful *SEIU Local 204 v. Attorney General* case, public-sector agencies dependent on government funding require full pay equity funding in order to operate. The decision restored the proxy pay equity laws. The Government responded in 1999 by stopping the funding from the proxy pay equity adjustments they owed. This led to another challenge by five public-sector unions. This asks the Court to order the government to restore funding the further yearly adjustments owing to approximately 100,000 women over the next 15 years to complete their move to non-discriminatory wages. The case is still going through the system.

The Ontario government has a constitutional and political responsibility to ensure all public sector employers receive adequate funding to achieve pay equity. Public sector employers denied proper funding will have to make a choice between flouting the law or cutting services and staff. Inadequate pay equity funding will lead to decreased health care and education services.

While pay equity is important for workers of colour and women, legislation alone will not resolve all the inequities encountered in the workplace. Employment equity legislation with a joint role for unions is needed to ensure bias-free hiring, retention and promotion within the labour force.

### ***Recommendations for A People's Charter:***

- ***Recognize pay equity as a basic human right.***
  - ***Ensure a proactive obligation to achieve and maintain pay equity.***
  - ***Non-unionized women must be guaranteed access to pay equity.***
  - ***Pay equity laws must include redress for race-based wage inequities.***
  - ***Enforcement must be strengthened and fully funded.***
  - ***Public sector pay equity adjustments must be fully funded.***
  - ***Employment equity laws must give a full and meaningful role to unions.***
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## 16. Persons with Disabilities

Persons with disabilities have a wide range of physical, sensory or psychological conditions, which may be visible or invisible. These conditions can affect our family members, co-workers, friends and acquaintances.

*"In Unison 2000: Persons with Disabilities in Canada"*, a report released in March 2001, noted that 16 percent of Canadians, 4.2 million people, were considered to have a disability in 1991.

- almost four million live in the community, 273,000 are in institutions;
- 56 percent were of working age;
- 9 percent were children under 14;
- 35 percent were over 65;
- among working-aged women, 13 percent were considered to have a disability;
- slightly more than half of the adults with a disability were affected by mild disability;
- one-third were affected by a moderate disability;
- 14 percent were affected by a severe disability, and
- among aboriginal people, 31 percent reported some form of disability - almost twice the national average.
  - 66 percent of aboriginal adults with disabilities were affected by a mild disability;
  - 22 percent by a moderate disability, and
  - 12 percent by severe disability.
- The likelihood of a person having a disability increases with age. As the population ages, the incidence of disability is increasing.

According to the *Ontarians with Disabilities Act (ODA) Committee*, over 1.5 million people in this province face a wide range of systemic barriers in all aspects of their lives. In May 2001, the Ontario Human Rights Commission reported that 40 percent of the complaints filed were from persons with disabilities.

Many Ontarians with disabilities are imprisoned in lives of poverty. Basic needs such as shelter are ignored by a government with no interest in social housing. The Ministry of Community and Social Services reduced facility-based care for families with medically fragile children and for adults with developmental disabilities.

Even a fundamental right to personal safety is ignored. People with disabilities are easy and constant targets for physical and sexual abuse.

Home care should be available to help people with disabilities live independently in their communities. But home care is an administrative mess. It is under-funded, causing cutbacks to needed services and a deteriorating work environment for service providers. Ontario needs a public, non-profit system for home care adequately funded to serve Ontarians, regardless of where they live.

Public transit is another crucial need. An accessible transit system is an important public service and must provide quality service.

Not all persons with disabilities in Ontario are in the paid workforce. Income support programs such as the Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP) must be strengthened. Organizations representing people with disabilities are working with the Ontario Social Safety Network, legal clinics and service providers to identify weaknesses in this program. The present system can be restructured based on these discussions.

Education and training should provide Ontarians with opportunities to improve lives. In reality, the education system is more of a gauntlet and less of an opportunity for persons with disabilities. For children with disabilities, the 1980 amendments to the *Education Act (Bill 82)* promised them assessments of and resources for their special needs in the primary and secondary levels. The government is not delivering on this promise. Quite the opposite. Budgets for special education needs programs were cut.

At the post-secondary level things are just as bad. The Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP) will not fund involvement in programs offered at publicly funded institutions. If people with a form of mental illness do not have an "incident" for two years, Ontario Disability Support Program can cut their funding support. Someone with attendant care who moves away to pursue educational opportunities may have to wait years to receive this support in a new location.

Many disabilities occur as a result of an injury at work or in the community. Ontario should implement a Universal No-Fault Accident and Illness Plan to compensate these victims regardless of the cause. These workers are often bounced between the Compensation Board and private insurance carriers, neither of which wants them on its books. The best solution is to make all workplaces safer. This is accomplished by improved legislation and programs to make workers aware of the hazards they face at work.

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***Recommendations for A People's Charter:***

- ***Advocate for strong and effective Employment Equity legislation at both the federal and provincial levels.***
- ***Ensure that effective legislation and functioning Human Rights Commissions protect the rights of all Ontarians.***
- ***Develop a public non-profit Home Care service to serve the best interests of users, providers and the community.***
- ***Organize public transportation system to serve the needs of Ontarians with disabilities. They must be involved in policy development and implementation. The government must provide resources for a truly accessible transportation system.***
- ***Reform the Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP) based on the experiences of those who use it and the workers and unions delivering it.***
- ***Establish a Universal No-Fault Accident and Illness Plan to compensate victims of accident or disease.***
- ***Reinstate the Occupational Disease Panel.***
- ***Enact a real Ontarians with Disabilities Act (ODA) to identify and remove barriers for 1.5 million people in our province.***
  - ***The Ontarians with Disabilities Act (ODA) passed in 2001 is so flawed that it should be scrapped. The process should begin again with the active involvement of persons with disabilities and their organizations from the very beginning of the process.***



## 17. Training and Apprenticeships

### Training

Training is a universal right that must be available to all employed workers, displaced workers, and people wanting to enter or re-enter the workforce. Skills training programs must be open to all, not just the youngest or fittest members of the workforce. It must be universally accessible, equitable and developmental. Training must become a vehicle for correcting the discrimination that women, visible minorities, aboriginal people, and the disabled have had to contend with in both the educational system and the workplace.

The current trend toward making individuals responsible for their own training must be reversed. All training must be voluntary and made available to workers during paid working time. Many employers make on going training a condition of employment, but require workers to enroll at their own expense and on their own time. This practice must be stopped.

Training must be targeted to the individual needs of workers. Workers must be able to have some choice in their training. Appropriate career and employment counseling must be available to ensure they can make informed choices.

Training must take into consideration the current condition of the labour force as well as future development needs of industry and the Canadian economy. This would include:

- the current and emerging needs of a particular industry or occupation;
- the identified economic development needs of a geographic region or community;
- the changing nature of work;
- occupational standards where they exist;
- employability skills, and
- work processes related to health and the environment for workers, individually and collectively.

Training must link the classroom to the workplace. Training programs must incorporate monitoring and evaluation practices that provide frequent feedback and various techniques to measure learner progress. Teaching staff must have recognizable qualifications, demonstrated instructional skills, and relevant experience in and knowledge of the field of study.

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**Recommendations for A People's Charter:**

- **Skills training for employed workers should be guaranteed through legislation obliging employers to provide it.**
  - *Employers must pay the cost of job-related training for employed workers through a payroll training tax administered by a bipartite Ontario training commission. This would act as a disincentive for employers to poach skilled workers from other employers who invest in training.*
- **Skills training for displaced workers and those entering or re-entering the workforce should be provided through government-financed training programs run in conjunction with public educational institutions.**
  - *Access to the training must be assured by government provision of adequate income support and social services support such as childcare and counseling. Any system of individual learning accounts must be opposed.*
- **Skills training must be developmental, portable, and generic, not employer-specific or narrowly defined.**
  - *It must provide real skills. It should not be used to shape, or otherwise limit, workers' expectations to make them more willing to take poor-paying insecure jobs.*
  - *Training programs must be provided in conjunction with public education institutions in which labour has a much more significant voice than it does now.*
  - *Government regulation is necessary to establish standards and ensure they are met.*
- **Prior learning assessment and recognition (PLAR) must be supported and funded to provide increased access to public education and training programs.**
  - *This enhances job security and career potential, and gives workers greater mobility within industrial and geographic sectors.*
  - *PLAR must include:*
    - *literacy*
    - *basic skills*
    - *ESL programs*

- *pre-apprenticeship training to assist semi-skilled and unskilled workers who are most in need of training and education*
- *assist immigrant workers whose skills have not previously been recognized*
- *PLAR must not be used to:*
  - *avoid proper apprenticeship training*
  - *aid competency-based occupational standards set by private corporations*
  - *shift training costs to the individual*
  - *undermine nationally recognized standards*
- ***The Ontario government must become party to a labour market agreement that will bring needed federal dollars to fund provincial training programs.***
  - *Labour market agreements have been signed between the federal government and all provincial governments except Ontario.*

### Apprenticeships

Ontario's apprenticeship system provides future skills for industry and the economy. By ensuring an adequate supply of skilled workers, it allows the province to better compete in the global economy. Recent changes to the apprenticeship system through the passage of Bill 55 threaten to dismantle this system.

Apprenticeship training is a cost-effective and efficient method of training for industry. Ninety to 95 percent of apprenticeship training is done on the job. The success of apprenticeship as a training program is dependent on its unique combination of workplace and academic education. The time-based, workplace component of apprenticeship training is essential, in that the apprentice must have an adequate period to learn from the journey-person. In-school training must support what is taught in the workplace.

Apprenticeship training must be used more widely to promote entry of new workers into the labour force, re-entry of workers returning to the labour force, and transition of those already in the labour force. Apprenticeship training must be promoted more effectively in the school system to provide opportunities for students not going on to post-secondary education in an era of high youth unemployment.

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Apprenticeship training must be accessible to all. Marketing and education initiatives must be expanded to ensure that current and future employers recognize female, aboriginal, and visible minority employees as potential apprentices.

Bill 55 split the apprenticeship system in Ontario in two, placing industrial trades in its purview, and leaving construction trades under the old *Trades Qualification and Apprenticeship Act (TQAA)*. It deregulated the system shifting the focus from apprenticeship as an employment relationship to apprenticeship as an education and training relationship. It removed the enforcement of regulatory provisions governing ratios and wage rates, and removed entry levels and duration from the legislation.

Skill sets must not replace “whole” trades. While there must be flexibility to recognize genuine new trades as technologies change, this must not be an excuse to fragment existing trades into partial components or skill sets which are then treated as new trades in themselves. Bill 55 redefines the work of specific trades to that of simple skill sets, which results in an increase in multi-crafting and multi-skilling, and a further fragmentation of existing trades. This splintering of the trades compromises the health and safety of workers, as well as consumer safety and environmental protection. It leads to a generation of workers who lack an understanding of their complete trade, and an overall de-skilling of Ontario's workforce.

Apprenticeship standards are set across the country through the Red Seal Program. This was established to provide greater mobility across Canada for skilled workers. By successfully completing an Inter-provincial Standards Examination, they can obtain a "Red Seal" endorsement on their Certificates of Qualification and Apprenticeship.

The program is intended to encourage standardization of provincial and territorial apprenticeship training and certification programs. The "Red Seal" allows qualified trades persons to practice the trade in any province or territory in Canada where the trade is designated without having to write further examinations. To date, there are 45 trades included in the Red Seal Program on a national basis.

The program is administered under the guidance of the Canadian Council of Directors of Apprenticeship (CCDA). Each province and territory has an appointed Director of Apprenticeship for this purpose.

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**Recommendations for A People's Charter:**

- **Compulsory certification must be introduced, after re-establishing “whole” trades.**
  - *Employer established, non-regulated “designer trades” must come under regulation through the established apprenticeship training programs. With that as a starting point, the entire system should move toward compulsory certification for all trades.*
  - *Compulsory certification will ensure increased flexibility and mobility, as well as higher standards, higher skill levels, higher quality training, and increased confidence in the apprenticeship system.*
  - *Compulsory certification will also help ensure public safety and consumer protection.*
- **Enforcement mechanisms must be legislated to ensure compliance with compulsory certification regulations by both employers and individuals.**
  - *Fines for violating the Act must be increased to significant levels. The enforcement mechanisms must have more clout, and penalties must be more strictly enforced.*
- **Wage requirements must be re-established and tuition fees for apprenticeship programs must be abolished.**
  - *Bill 55 deregulated wage requirements for apprentices and the government is now introducing tuition fees for apprenticeship programs. Both of these moves download the costs of training to the individual, and act as a deterrent to potential new apprentices entering the trades.*
- **Provincial Advisory Committees (PAC) must be established for all trades, and must be given more responsibility and authority.**
  - *In Ontario, they exist for regulated trades only and they are strictly advisory in nature. The committees should provide more input on training, intake, standards, and education requirements while government should retain a role in promotion, licensing, programming, and enforcement.*
  - *School-to-work and pre-apprenticeship programs must be designed to adhere to the wages, ratios and standards set out by the PAC's.*

- ***The Red Seal Program must be expanded.***
  - *The provincial government must be part of a move to expand and enforce this program to provide for national standards based on industry needs for all occupations identified as suitable for the apprenticeship training model.*
  - *These standards must cover all aspects of training, including on-the-job and in-school training, trained qualifications, examinations, and certifications.*



## **18. Violence Against Women**

Violence against women takes many forms: partner abuse, sexual violence, workplace harassment, abuse within institutions/residential care, and within community systems and services. It can be any combination of physical, sexual or emotional abuse. While much of it takes place at the personal level, the violence continues because it is still accepted at a social and institutional level.

It is well established that violence against women is rooted in social, political and economic inequality between men and women.

While all women live with the threat of male violence, some face additional inequalities that compound the problem. Among these are aboriginal women, women of colour, recent immigrants, women with disabilities, lesbian and bisexual women, older women and poor women. They are at greater risk of abuse and violence.

Violence against women has serious impacts on our children, both today and in their future lives.

Women are not victims by nature, they become victims because we cannot access the means to protect and support our children and ourselves. Strengthening women's economic and social position must be the centrepiece of any plan to stop violence against women and children.

Canadian society is becoming dangerously polarized between the 'haves' and 'have-nots', and many women are falling further and further behind. This has unquestionably weakened women's position in ending violence against women.

Public policy initiatives on solutions to violence against women focus primarily on the criminal system and gender-neutral approaches. They favour the use of heavy-handed law enforcement strategies against socially disadvantaged groups. This fails to address the violence women face in their intimate family relationships, or within institutions and workplaces. Violence is a serious crime, and the men who commit it must be held responsible and given the appropriate penalties. At the same time, the tendency to divert attention away from the broader needs of women and children is both dangerous and reprehensible.

In Ontario, years of cuts to basic social programs and community services, health care, education, workplace safety standards, legal aid, direct anti-violence services and neighbourhood supports left women in a hardened state of inequality, leaving us increasingly at risk of violence.

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Women's safety and freedom depends on a comprehensive, consistent, long-term approach that addresses the root problem of women's social, economic and political inequality.

Women and children have a fundamental human right to live free from violence and threats of violence. This is the law in Canada - the Charter of Rights and Freedoms and the Criminal Code make this clear. Both immediate intervention and prevention strategies must be government priorities and must acknowledge the following principles:

- violence against women is a gender-specific reality and requires a gender-specific solution;
- all approaches must be inclusive and must respect and reflect the diversity of all women and children in Ontario;
- public policy must include active participation of women from all communities;
- ending violence requires a commitment from all sectors of the community;
- government has a social and legal responsibility to use public resources to stop violence against women and children, and
- all policies and practices to address violence against women must include accountability processes and mechanisms for both individual abusers and systems/services.

Women and children cannot wait. Anyone seeking to represent the people of Ontario must immediately make a commitment to these essential principles and strategies to end violence against women. The coming provincial election is an opportunity for all political parties to demonstrate that commitment.

### ***Recommendations for A People's Charter:***

*Women's advocates have developed numerous strategies for addressing and ending violence against women. They fall into the following general areas:*

- ***Increases to basic social supports, including social assistance, low-income and subsidized housing, childcare, health care, education and legal aid.***
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- **Legislative reform that reflects the reality of violence against women in areas of:**
  - family, civil and criminal law;
  - human rights;
  - legislation governing the workplace, including pay and employment equity, and all areas of administrative law.
  
- **Implementation of legislative reforms with concrete practices to address violence against women.**
  
- **Independent, women-controlled community-based services, including:**
  - women's shelters;
  - sexual assault centres;
  - neighbourhood women's centres and specific services for diverse communities of women, and
  - anti-violence education services.
  
- **Government commitment to public advocacy, including financial support and recognition of women's and equality-seeking groups as essential to the development of policy, practice and programs to end violence against women.**



## 19. Workplace Equality

There are six criteria for measuring workplace equality. These “six measures of equality” are an effective tool to judge what progress has been achieved for women and other equity seeking groups. This holistic approach to equality requires employers to track their progress towards creating a truly representative workforce.

The “measures of equality” were designed to help employers develop a diverse workforce that reflects the community around it.

The six “measures of equality” are:

- **Representation**

The workforce must be representative of designated group members at all levels in the same proportion as they are in the working age population.

- **Occupational distribution**

Are members of certain designated groups trapped in job ghettos such as clerical work or well represented throughout all occupations?

- **Decision-making/authority**

Are designated group members in senior or executive positions or concentrated in positions with little decision-making power or authority?

- **Working conditions**

Is there a supportive work environment for employees? For example, are workplace harassment policies in place and enforced? Are daycare facilities provided? Are flexible work arrangements an option?

- **Tenure**

Are the designated group members in full-time, permanent employment or concentrated in auxiliary and part-time positions?

- **Pay equity**

Are designated group members receiving equal pay for work of equal value? Does a gender or race-based wage gap exist?

Equality in the workplace is achieved only when all these indicators are met for all designated group members. All designated groups within a workforce must be measured against these six “measures of equality” to understand whether equality in the workplace has been attained.

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***Recommendations for A People's Charter:***

- ***The government of Ontario should implement legislation requiring employers to set up workplace employment equity committees and adhere to the six measures of equality.***

***Workplace Equality  
Questions for Discussion***

1. **After bringing so many activists and organizations together to develop this section on Workplace Equality, is there anything that should be added, refined or strengthened?**
  2. **What would be your top three priority recommendations?**
  3. **How can you use the recommendations and background information to bring about positive change in your community?**
-

### 20. Youth

Young workers, between the ages of 15 and 24, are among the most vulnerable in the job market. They are more likely to be engaged in precarious employment in non-union occupations, and in the sales and service sectors. Across Canada, 94 percent of them work in the private sector. Seven out of 10 work in service industry jobs. Half of all young workers are employed in wholesale or retail trade, food services, and hospitality. These service sector jobs are the least unionized, with low pay, no benefits, arbitrary scheduling and lack of security. They are also among the fastest growing areas of employment.

Young workers earn less than adults. In 1995, those working full-time, all year earned between \$11,900 and \$32,000. Low earnings and ineligibility for E.I. and Social Assistance puts many youth at risk of poverty. In 1997, 51 percent of young workers who lived on their own had incomes below the poverty line. Increasing tuition fees make it more difficult to access the post-secondary education that might enable them to increase their earnings.

Young workers have higher rates of part-time work than do older workers, and young women are more likely to work part-time than young men. Nearly half of all young workers have part-time employment. In 1999, 20 percent said this is because full-time work was not available. Young workers in part-time jobs are covered by a collective agreement in just 11 percent of their workplaces. Those with full-time jobs are covered by a union in 15 percent of their workplaces. Young workers are more likely to be juggling classes and work, or holding multiple jobs. Many depend on self-employment and contract work to make a living. In 1996, approximately 5 percent of young workers were self-employed.

At a time of globalization and economic re-structuring, downsizing and lay-offs put young workers at a particular disadvantage when competing with more mature workers with more experience and seniority. Youth unemployment in Ontario is about 2½ times that of adults, and young workers have over double the level of underemployment and marginal employment than older workers.

Employers tend to exploit younger workers' inexperience and lack of knowledge about their rights. Many are given the dirty jobs that no one else wants to do, and are not properly trained by employers in safe procedures. Most injuries among new workers occur within their first year of work. Each year more than 18,000 young workers are injured on the job in Ontario. In 1999, 11 were killed on the job. Their injury rate is more than double the general average.

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**Recommendations for A People's Charter:**

- **Targeted accident prevention.**
  - *Legislation must be introduced to provide at least five hours of mandatory paid training in:*
    - *Hazard recognition, assessment and control*
    - *Rights and obligations under the Occupational Health and Safety Act and the Workplace Safety and Insurance Act.*
  
- **Increase the minimum wage to at least \$8.35 an hour to bring it above the poverty line.**
  - *Eliminate the student wage.*
  - *Eliminate unpaid training hours for new workers*
  - *Employers must cover the costs of uniforms and tools for workers, when required for the job.*
  - *Legislate equal pay and benefits for part-time workers.*
  
- **Support and expand youth employment and training programs.**
  - *Specific programs for youth facing multiple barriers to finding decent jobs, such as those with disabilities, aboriginals, visible minorities, women, and gay, lesbian, transgendered or transsexual youth.*
  
- **Cap the maximum hours that can be worked in a week at 37.**
  - *Legislate an end to forced overtime.*
    - *Overtime has been spiraling upwards over the past ten years, with one million workers across the country averaging over 8 hours of paid overtime every week. This is the equivalent of 225,000 full-time jobs.*

- ***Lower, and eventually eliminate, post-secondary tuition fees.***
  - *Fees for undergraduate arts programs rose by 134 per cent in the decade between 1990 and 2000.*
  - *Many students acquire debts over \$20,000 to obtain a four-year university degree, and \$15,000 for a college diploma.*
  - *Adequate funding of colleges and universities is necessary to take the burden of financing post-secondary education away from students.*

***Youth  
Questions for Discussion***

1. **After bringing so many activists and organizations together to develop this section on Youth, is there anything that should be added, refined or strengthened?**
  2. **What would be your top three priority recommendations?**
  3. **How can you use the recommendations and background information to bring about positive change in your community?**
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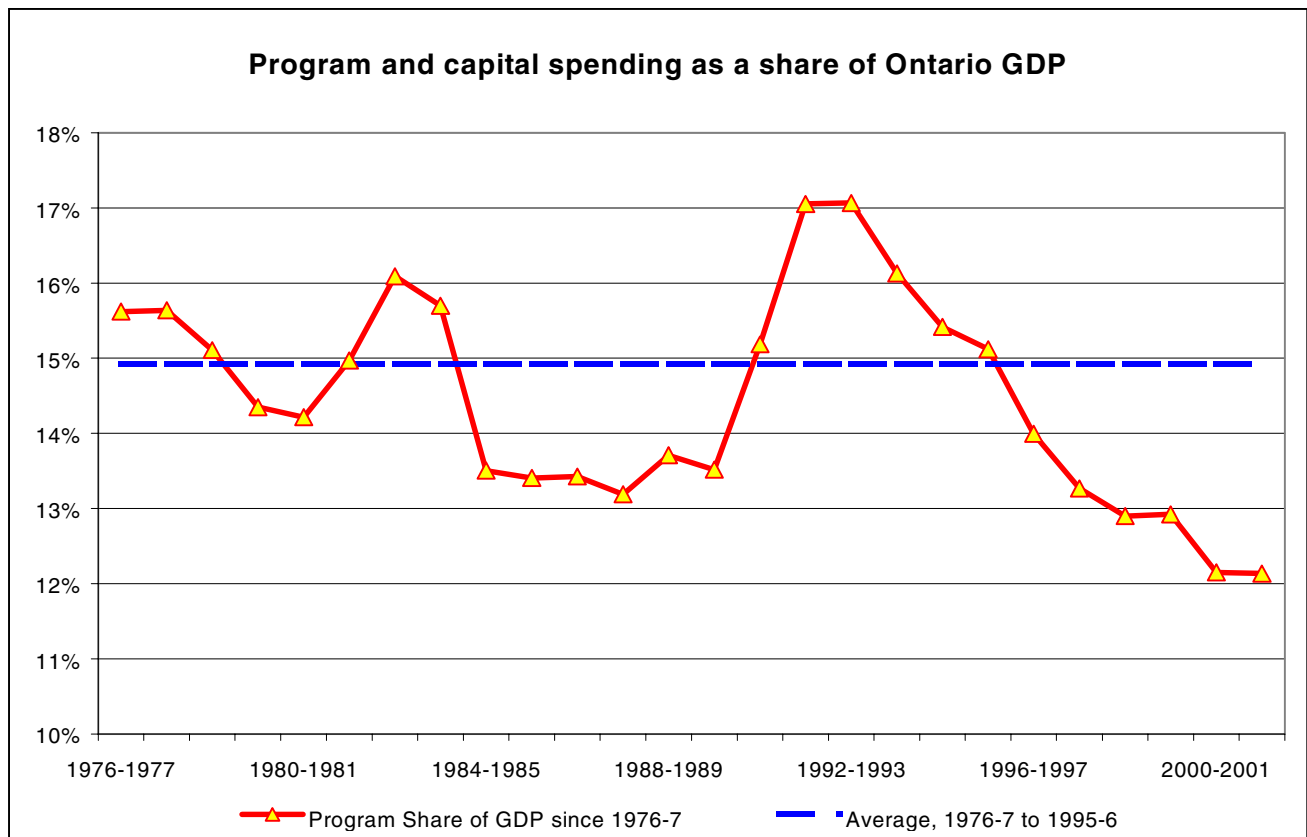
## Fiscal Framework

The fiscal framework for A People's Charter project was prepared by the Ontario Alternative Budget Working Group. Based on a four-year time frame, it provides a set of fiscal proposals to reverse the destructive effects of the Common Sense Revolution and to rebuild Ontario's essential public services and programs. It supports a four year reform agenda for Ontario's next government

The past eight years have been truly devastating. As Chart 1 shows, Ontario spending on public services and programs and on capital works has dropped from 15.1% of GDP in 1995-96 – just above the average for the previous 20 years of 14.9% – to 11.9% for 2002-03.

That represents a cut of nearly 20% in the relative size of Ontario's public economy.

**Chart 1 – Program and Capital Spending as a Share of Ontario GDP**



This People's Charter fiscal framework calls for program renewal investments reaching \$11.2 billion annually over a 4-year phase-in period. To end the slow starvation of public services during the Harris years, the Charter would maintain the real, per capita value of the 2001-2 level of public services, for a total increase in public services spending over four years of \$18.6 billion.

In the first year, its goal is to deal with the urgent crises in social assistance, education, health care, housing, childcare and environmental protection. It will stabilize other areas of public service, and forestall further damaging cuts.

In subsequent years, we propose to set out a careful and responsible program for the renewal of Ontario's public economy.

We put public services back on track for long-term stability by stabilizing the real, per capita value of our public services, reversing the years of slow starvation by the Conservatives.

Even with this major reinvestment in public services, however, public spending will remain well within Ontario's ability to pay. By 2005-6, program and capital spending will reach 13% of Ontario's economy, compared with an average of 14.9% in the 20 years before the Harris government was elected, and 13.1% in the last year of the first Harris government.

Revenue growth finances 100% of the cost of maintaining the real, per capita value of the 2001-2 public services base, and contributes approximately 65% of the cost of public services renewal. The remainder is financed from a series of modest tax measures spread over a number of different tax bases – corporate and personal income taxes, tobacco taxes and employer health taxes.

Under this fiscal framework, Ontario will be withdrawing from the race to the bottom in corporate tax rates. The corporate tax rates that existed in 1998 clearly were not an obstacle to this province's economic recovery. Indeed, the data show clearly that exports led, and were largely responsible for, Ontario's growth in the late 1990s.

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***Recommendations for A People's Charter:***

In response to the flattening of the tax structure over the past decade, we propose to ***increase the number of tax brackets for those earning above \$100,000 per year.***

To ensure that vital services on which Ontario depends are paid for appropriately and visibly, we propose a modest, but important, ***increase in personal income tax rates (0.25%) for all taxpayers in Ontario.***

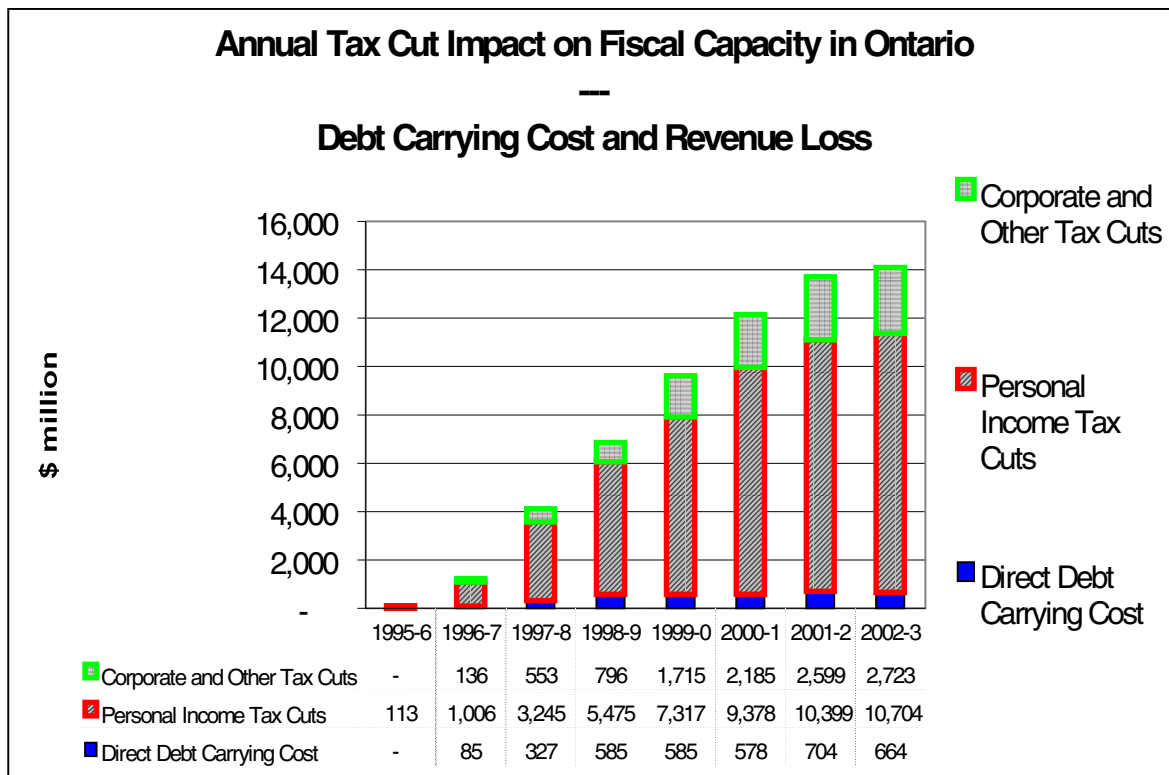
A People's Charter proposes to ***restructure the Employer Health Tax as a uniform payroll tax earmarked for the funding of health care.*** Increased revenue from tobacco taxes will be directed towards health promotion and health care renewal.

These revenue changes will put Ontario's public services system back on track for long-term sustainability at a level consistent with what the people of this province want, need and are willing to pay for.

Even after allowing for a \$1 billion contingency each year, the OAB projects a surplus of \$4.2 billion over its four-years.

During the Harris-Eves era, Ontario's tax base has been ravaged to pay for their tax cuts. The OAB estimates that the impact of all these tax cuts adds up to \$13.3 billion in lost revenue for this year alone. And each year the annual loss gets bigger. Without the tax cuts, there would be no public service deficit. Ontario's revenue base would be more than \$13 billion higher in 2002-03 than it is today. And if the Government had not chosen to cut taxes before it balanced its budget, annual debt interest costs would be lower by \$700 million a year.

Chart 2 – Annual Tax Cut Impact on Fiscal Capacity in Ontario

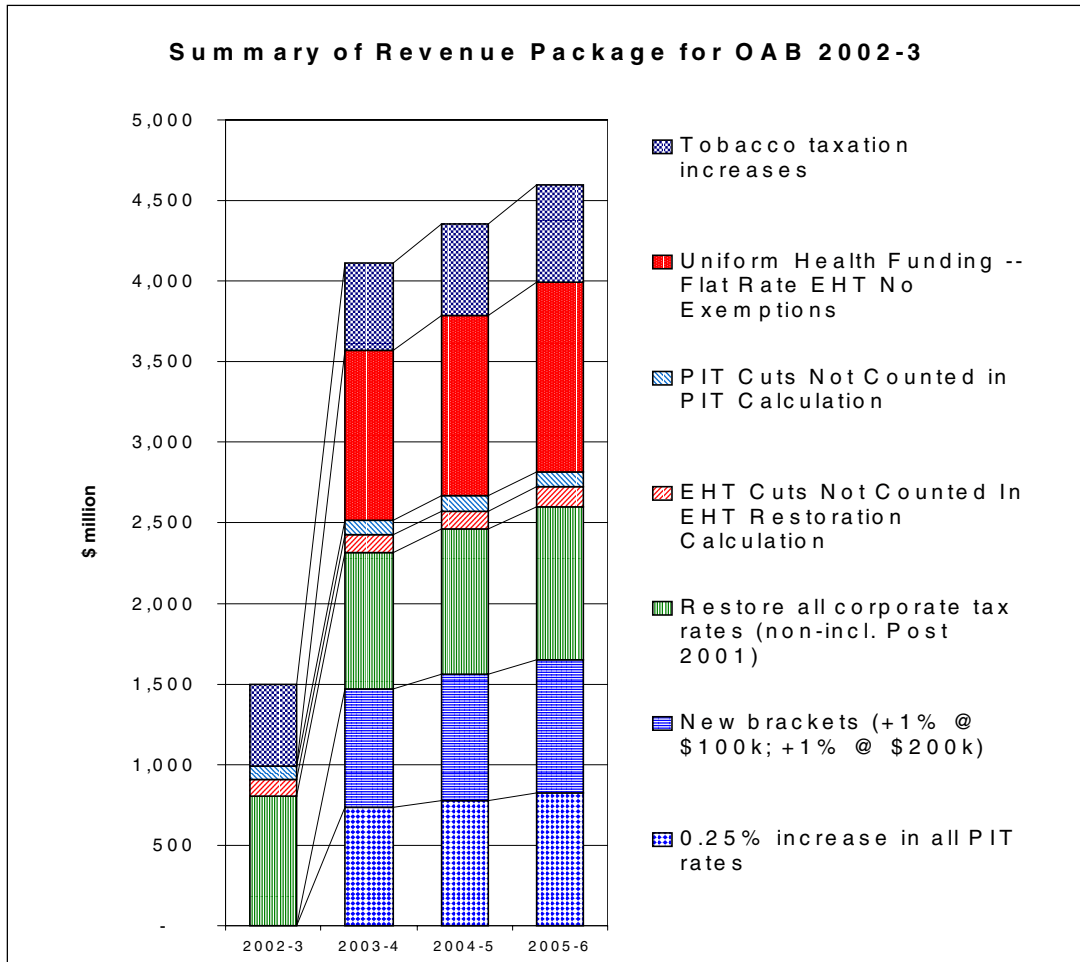


A People's Charter calls for the reinvestment \$11.2 billion in 2002-03 dollars, to rebuild and renew public services in Ontario over a four year period. Over the four year cycle, this provides for total new spending of \$18.6 billion - \$11.2 billion for public services renewal, \$4.0 billion to protect this investment against inflation, and \$3.2 billion to keep pace with population growth.

Chart 3 – Fiscal Framework Summary (all figures \$ million)

<b>OAB 2002-3 Fiscal Framework Summary</b>						
	<b>2001-2</b>	<b>2002-3</b>	<b>2003-4</b>	<b>2004-5</b>	<b>2005-6</b>	<b>4-yr. total</b>
Program + capital	54,263	59,372	64,582	68,243	72,923	
Public debt interest	8,553	8,369	8,117	7,826	7,711	
Ontario hydro	589	589	589	589	589	
Reserve	0	1,000	1,000	1,000	1,000	
Total revenue	63,463	68,539	75,405	79,658	84,082	
Budget deficit (-) / surplus (+)	58	(791)	1,118	2,000	1,859	4,186
New spending	n/a	5,109	5,210	3,661	4,680	18,660
Inflation coverage	n/a	651	1,009	1,130	1,194	3,985
Population growth coverage	n/a	713	772	840	887	3,212
Net new real, 2002-3 \$	n/a	3,744	3,371	1,635	2,468	11,218

The tax changes for the fiscal framework are summarized in the final chart.



Complete details are set out in the Ontario Alternative Budget for 2002-03, which can be downloaded from [www.policyalternatives.ca](http://www.policyalternatives.ca).

