

Housing and homelessness

What They Promised

To let the private market provide housing for all income groups.

What They Delivered

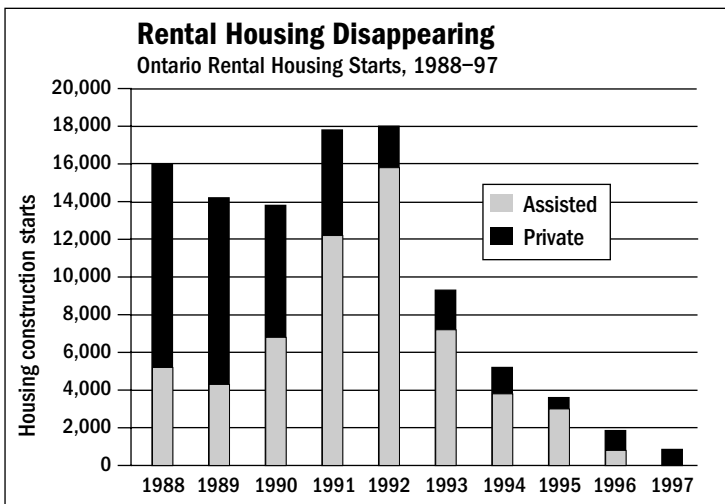
A “made-in-Ontario” housing crisis, as the government


- killed 17,000 co-op and non-profit units under development;
- removed rent control from vacant apartments; and
- cut welfare, including the shelter allowance, by 21.6%.

Very few rental units have been built since the Harris government came to power. Tenants report recent rent increases of up to 30% on vacant apartments. Meanwhile, homelessness increases.

What We Propose

- construction and rehabilitation of 10,800 rental units this year, at a cost of \$272 million.
- shelter allowance for almost a 250,000 people with special needs or in low-income families, and an increase in the shelter portion of welfare, at a cost of \$403 million.
- that these programs be in addition to recently announced new federal money for housing.



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For a budget summary,
turn this page over. 
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What does the Ontario Alternative Budget do?

Our budget does three things:

- One: It discredits the Harris government's claim that its tax cuts and fiscal policies have produced substantial gains for middle-income earners;
- Two: It documents the devastating impact of the Harris government policies on Ontarians; and
- Three: It proposes an alternative budget that would restore public services to their real per-capita 1995-96 level while eliminating the deficit by 2001-2002.

Problems

Contrary to government claims,

- the reductions in income taxes of \$738 for the average family **will have no positive impact**, because provincial cuts in funding have led to increased user fees and property taxes, and other costs of at least \$766. These new costs **entirely wipe out the tax cut** for three-quarters of Ontario's families.
- if there had never been a Harris government (no public spending cuts; no tax cuts), **the budget would have been balanced in the 1998-99 fiscal year** anyway, through increased revenues. We would be discussing instead how to spend the surplus, not what to do about damaged public services.
- **nearly \$2 billion has been cut from health care** since Harris was elected, when inflation and population growth are taken into account.
- **Harris government policies actually have held back job growth in Ontario.** Ontario's job performance is entirely attributable to the lower Canadian dollar and growth in the U.S. economy.
- on a comparable per-capita basis, **\$570 per child has been removed from the public school system**, totalling \$1.2 billion.

Solutions

The Ontario Alternative Budget proposes to

- **increase revenues in order to restore public services and balance the budget by 2000-2001.** We can do this by restoring the tax cut that was given to the highest-income 20% of taxpayers, returning tobacco taxes to pre-1994 levels, and eliminating pointless tax breaks for business.

The Choice

The Ontario Alternative Budget shows that

- **Ontario's deficit and public service crisis is not inevitable** but the result of political choices made by a government that is not interested in the greater public good.
- **it is possible to reverse the damage caused by the Harris government and repair our public services** within a responsible taxation and fiscal framework.

Need more information? Contact us:

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