

# AN ONTARIO FOR ALL

## ONTARIO FEDERATION OF LABOUR 2020 PRE-BUDGET SUBMISSION

January 2020



**THE ONTARIO FEDERATION OF LABOUR'S  
2020 PRE-BUDGET SUBMISSION**  
to the Standing Committee on Finance and  
Economic Affairs, Government of Ontario

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Ontario Federation of Labour  
2020 Pre-Budget Submission

Standing Committee on  
Finance and Economic Affairs  
January 2020

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# PREAMBLE

Many communities across the province have been shut out of political, social, and economic power – particularly as the divide between the working class and rich grow; as our social safety net is systematically dismantled; as our institutions remain unresponsive to our needs; and as the future we want for ourselves, for our communities, and for our world at large appears increasingly out of reach for many.

Since being elected, many policies of the Ford government have impacted our high-quality public services and weakened our social safety net; undermined our working conditions and the democracy of our workplaces; restricted our access to justice and failed to recognize the experiences of equity-seeking workers; and endangered the health and safety of our workplaces and our communities.

The Ontario Federation of Labour (OFL), which represents 54 affiliated unions and one million workers across the province, believes that the 2020 Ontario budget provides an important opportunity for the Ford government to change course.

Ontario workers and their families demand a government that will address various social, economic, and environmental injustices as well as articulate a bold vision that creates an Ontario for all.

**We need a government that is for the many – not the few.**

# PUBLIC SERVICES FOR ALL



**The deregulation of financial districts, the expansion of unfair trade and investment deals, the destabilization of workers' rights, the erosion of progressive taxation, the retrenchment of welfare state programs, and the privatization of public services have all led to pronounced economic inequality across the globe.**

The world's richest 1 per cent own 45 per cent of the world's wealth.<sup>i</sup> In fact, in Canada, the wealthiest 87 families own as much wealth as the bottom 12 million Canadians. In other words, these families have more wealth than every person in PEI, New Brunswick and Newfoundland and Labrador combined.<sup>ii</sup>

Inequality, however, is not inevitable. It is a political choice.

Decades of neoliberal economic policies and programs in Ontario, for example, have resulted in the province having the highest income inequality in Canada.<sup>iii</sup>

And the Ford government continues to perpetuate that divide. The 2019 budget cut or froze spending in nearly every ministry by taking from the vulnerable and giving to the wealthy.

They are singularly focused on slashing program spending – not increasing revenues.

Ontario already has the lowest program spending per person of any province in Canada.

According to the Financial Accountability Office, the Ford government plans to further reduce spending per person per year by \$1,070 over the next five years. Demand for public services, on the other hand, will exceed the government's planned program spending by approximately \$5 billion by 2021-22. As a result, there is a significant risk that their fiscal plan will not provide sufficient resources to meet future ongoing demand for key public services.<sup>iv</sup>

Instead of generating greater monies for public services, the Ford government's regressive policy agenda will reduce revenues by \$4.2 billion in 2019-20 and by an average of \$3.4 billion from 2020-21 to 2023-24.<sup>v</sup> This includes forgoing \$3.0 billion in lost revenue from the cap-and-trade program over the next four years;<sup>vi</sup> spending \$1.9 billion over five years on the ineffective LIFT tax credit (in lieu of a \$15 minimum wage);<sup>vii</sup> forfeiting \$275 million in lost revenue per year in personal income tax from high-income earners; and gifting \$3.8 billion in tax relief over the next six years to corporations.<sup>viii</sup>

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**THERE IS A SIGNIFICANT RISK THAT THE GOVERNMENT'S FISCAL PLAN WILL NOT PROVIDE SUFFICIENT RESOURCES TO MEET FUTURE ONGOING DEMAND FOR KEY PUBLIC SERVICES.**



Corporations and the wealthy should be paying their fair share of taxes.

According to Canadians for Tax Fairness, January 7<sup>th</sup> marked the date when Canadian corporations have earned enough in revenues to pay all of their federal and provincial income taxes for 2020. In other words, corporate income taxes accounted for an average of just 1.75 per cent – less than a week’s worth – of their annual operating revenues.<sup>ix</sup>

It is argued that raising corporate tax rates will hurt investment. The reality, however, is that lower taxes have not directly stimulated greater business investment. In fact, Canada’s corporate income tax rate was reduced from 43 per cent in 1997 to 26.7 per cent in 2016. Over that 20-year period, investment in machinery and equipment and in intellectual property remained below the 1997 level as a per cent of GDP.<sup>x</sup>

Increasing corporate tax rates by two percentage points, for example, will generate \$2.4 billion in additional revenues this year, growing to \$2.8 billion by 2022. This increase still leaves Ontario rates half a percentage point below where they were in 2010 – when the last rate reduction occurred.<sup>xi</sup>

Instead, the Ford government’s regressive fiscal policies place Ontario families further and further behind – in more ways than one. Such policies undermine the value of what taxes fund for workers and everyone else: public services.

### Health Care

In addition to massively underfunding our health care system, including our hospitals, the government has made one of the biggest structural changes to Ontario’s health care system. They have dissolved numerous specialized and regional health care providers to create a singular super agency. The government now has extraordinary powers to privatize our health care system; to order mega-mergers and transfers of important health care services; and to undermine unionized workers’ rights.

They have also cut half a billion dollars from our provincial health insurance plan, leaving important tests and procedures uncovered. And earlier last year, the government ended health insurance coverage for Ontarians travelling outside of the country.

Ultimately, the Ford government is taking steps towards undoing our universal health care system.

### Education

They are also attempting to undermine the quality of our education system.

Per student funding has decreased. Average class sizes, however, are increasing for grades four through 12 – with some classes seeing more than 40 students in a room. This will undoubtedly jeopardize students’ learning environments; eliminate tens of thousands of education workers – including teachers – across the province; as well as reduce access to after-school programs and elective courses, endangering post-secondary aspirations.

The Ford government’s first attack on post-secondary education was threatening institutions with funding cuts if they did not allow all speech, including racist, discriminatory, and hateful remarks, on campus.

**JANUARY 7<sup>TH</sup> MARKED THE DATE WHEN CANADIAN CORPORATIONS HAVE EARNED ENOUGH IN REVENUES TO PAY ALL OF THEIR FEDERAL AND PROVINCIAL INCOME TAXES FOR 2020. CORPORATE INCOME TAXES ACCOUNTED FOR LESS THAN A WEEK'S WORTH OF THEIR ANNUAL OPERATING REVENUES.**

They also made a series of changes in January 2019. Grants for low-income students have been turned into loans even on a retroactive basis. The government also cancelled the six-month interest-free period on student loans – all measures that negatively impact access to post-secondary education. While they did cut ten per cent of tuition fees, they failed to supplement that change with additional funding.

### Child Care

Ontario is home to the most expensive child care in the country, across all age groups.

Instead of building spaces that are affordable, high-quality, and publicly delivered, they have increased the capacity of the private sector to deliver child care – lifting the cap on the amount of public funding that can be allocated towards for-profit child care. The government also passed laws that relax restrictions around the number of children home child care providers – both regulated and unregulated – can care for at any given time. It is important to understand that these restrictions were introduced years ago after several infant deaths in Ontario's private child care sector.

### Social and Community Services

The Ford government also planned to cut \$1 billion from social and community services over the next three years. This was largely a result of their regressive social assistance reforms, which essentially refashioned the system to limit access for folks with disabilities and force recipients into low-paying and exploitative jobs. In October 2019, they paused their actions.

These potential changes are in addition to the fact that the government slashed in half a scheduled three per cent increase to social assistance rates as well as 50 per cent of funding from the Poverty Reduction Strategy. Further, in late 2019, the government announced they will be overhauling Employment Ontario, rolling employment supports previously offered separately through Ontario Works and the Ontario Disability Support Program under one new system. This will mean disrupting services for workers and potentially introducing a role for American for-profit organizations in the delivery of our services.

Instead of working towards eradicating poverty in our lifetime, they are plummeting more individuals into greater depths of uncertainty.

Unsurprisingly, the Ford government is trying to manufacture a crisis in just about every sector and community across Ontario in an effort to chronically underfund our public services; to set the stage for further privatization and greater contracting out; to order more restructures and mergers within different public sectors and agencies – or to eliminate them altogether; to move towards individual or private funding models; to download greater responsibilities to municipalities without providing them with the needed funding; and to shift away from universality to means testing for access to programs and services.

**At the OFL, we believe that everyone must have access to high-quality public services.**

JANUARY 2020

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
		7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30	31	

**Recommendations:**

**Public services for all means that this government must...**

- // Ensure that big corporations and the wealthy contribute their fair share of taxes
- // Establish, invest in, and strengthen access to publicly delivered universal services and programs – such as health care, mental health care, pharma care, dental care, child care, housing, elementary and secondary education, post-secondary education, social and community services, and public pensions – for all residents
- // Stop the privatization of our public services and assets, including crown corporations as well as our health care, education, child care, and infrastructure systems
- // Ensure that provincial funding models for publicly delivered services only allocate public monies to public/licensed institutions (e.g., education, child care, and health care)
- // Guarantee professional-level wages for all public sector workers
- // Increase hospital funding by at least 5.3 per cent each year to protect service levels and rebuild capacity
- // Boost investment in the EMS system to meet the annual six per cent growth in demand
- // Invest a minimum \$2.4 billion in new funding over the next four years in mental health care
- // Legislate at least four hours of hands-on care per resident per day in long-term care facilities
- // Revamp the education funding formula, invest money to fix crumbling schools, and restore the programs, services, policies and staffing needed in each community for students to succeed
- // Demand that school boards immediately respond to the safety concerns, suggestions, and demands being put forward by educational workers and their unions
- // Maintain the current Full-Day Kindergarten model with a full-time certified teacher and a designated early childhood educator
- // Create a comprehensive provincial social housing program that treats housing as a public utility
- // Build non-profit, affordable child care spaces as well as putting an end to end to licensing new for-profit child care centres
- // Eliminate tuition fees for all post-secondary students and removing interest on existing student loans
- // Increase social assistance rates to well above the poverty line
- // Expand access to social assistance for all persons regardless of their immigration status and providing supports with dignity

# DECENT WORK FOR ALL



**THE 100 HIGHEST PAID  
CEOS EARNED AN  
AVERAGE OF  
227 TIMES MORE THAN  
THE AVERAGE WORKER  
IN 2018.**

**AVERAGE WORKER PAY**

**CEO PAY**

## **The divide between the working class and the rich is expanding at an exponential rate.**

According to a 2020 Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives report, by 10:09 a.m. on January 2<sup>nd</sup>, Canada's highest paid CEOs made as much money as the average Canadian worker will earn all year. In fact, the 100 highest paid CEOs earned an average of 227 times more than the average worker in 2018. The report also found that between 2008 and 2018, average-income workers saw their pay grow 24 per cent. Contrastingly, during this same period, Canada's top 100 CEOs received a 61 per cent raise.<sup>xii</sup>

The decline in worker power has not been accidental. The Right has explicitly targeted workers' rights with several regressive policies, including here in Ontario.

On more than one occasion, the Ford government has introduced back-to-work legislation for workers on strike – a blatant attack on their constitutional freedom to associate for common workplace goals and their fight for decent work.

In 2018, Ontario's Conservative government systematically dismantled decent work laws with the *Making Ontario Open for Business Act*, including repealing the scheduled \$15 minimum wage, removing two paid sick days, eliminating equal pay for equal work, and reverting to laws that made it harder to access union protection. They also paused laws that were intended to bridge the wage gap – all measures which disproportionately affect women workers, workers of colour, and other equity-seeking workers.

In January 2019, the Ford government announced the Student Choice Initiative, which will allow post-secondary students to opt out of paying their union fees. This will severely limit the ability of student unions to provide the services and spaces that their members need. In November 2019, however, the Ontario Divisional Court found that the government acted unlawfully, decreeing that “there is no statutory authority authorizing Cabinet or the Minister to interfere in the internal affairs of these student associations.”<sup>xiii</sup>

As of 2019, the government has mandated that provincial agencies will need to obtain approval of their bargaining mandates and the ratification of their collective agreements. They have also signalled that they are looking to expand collective bargaining oversight to other areas of the broader public sector.

And in November 2019, the Ontario government passed legislation that will limit total compensation increases – including salary and benefits’ increases – at one per cent per year for the next three years. Given that the cost of living in 2018 for Ontario was 2.4 per cent, this is a real wage cut for public sector workers and infringes on their right to free collective bargaining.

Meanwhile, they have gifted compensation increases to the wealthy. In February 2019, for example, it was announced that the Province will provide doctors with a salary raise of at least 3.5 per cent over four years.<sup>xiv</sup> In June 2019, the Premier named 31 MPPs as parliamentary assistants, meaning that all of those MPPs will now receive an additional \$16,600 on top of their already six-figure salaries.<sup>xv</sup> Further, in October 2019, it was revealed through published orders-in-council that the minimum salary for deputy ministers has increased by 14 per cent since 2016. These 28 individuals will now earn at least \$234,000 per year.<sup>xvi</sup>

It is important to understand that the Ford government’s actions are rooted in a larger conservative ideology that includes shrinking the responsibility of government; undermining the working class’ collective action and constitutional rights; reducing access to unions; driving down wages in both the public and private sector; attacking workplace benefits; and contracting out more work.

**At the OFL, we believe that everyone must have decent work conditions to make Ontario a better place to work and live.**

### **Recommendations:**

#### **Decent working conditions for all means that this government must...**

- // Introduce at least a \$15 minimum wage immediately with no exceptions
- // Provide job-protected paid leave for all workers to access in the event of sickness and/or personal emergency
- // Establish equal pay for equal work standards, greater enforcement, and no loopholes
- // Ensure fairer scheduling laws
- // Create job-protected paid leave for survivors of domestic and/or sexual violence and expand the definition of Domestic Violence to include emotional abuse
- // Develop – in consultation with labour – a portable, publicly run benefits program for workers not covered by a workplace benefits plan
- // Strengthen protections for temporary agency workers and migrant workers
- // Guarantee that every worker is covered under the *Employment Standards Act (ESA)* and the *Labour Relations Act (LRA)*
- // Recognize that the collective bargaining process no longer only occurs between one union and one employer within an individual workplace
- // Provide access to workplace information when a union is engaged in an organizing drive
- // Extend card-based certification to all sectors

- // Make it easier to certify a union when the employer has contravened the LRA
- // Provide automatic access to first contract arbitration in all cases
- // Extend successor rights to all contracted services
- // Guarantee the right of employees to return to work following a lawful strike or lockout
- // Stop interfering in the collective bargaining process like introducing back-to-work legislation, allowing replacement workers, breaking contracts, and legislating maximums on bargained working conditions and forms of compensation
- // Stop interfering in the democratic practices of unions, including student unions
- // Prioritize workers' rights, consumer protection, and tax compliance in all new and emerging business models
- // Increase access to meaningful paid work-integrated learning opportunities for students
- // Strengthen benefit security for existing pension plan members and expanding coverage to the millions without any employer pension plan
- // Promote defined benefit pension plans over all other retirement schemes
- // Prioritize workers' wages, severance pay, and pension funds over all other creditors in the case of bankruptcy
- // Increase pension insurance coverage to reflect inflationary pressures
- // Ensure members have a voice when significant changes are made to pension plan funding

# JUSTICE FOR ALL



## **Economic inequality does not affect us all in the same way.**

It is compounded by the realities of fascism, colonialism, racism, bigotry, misogyny, xenophobia, homophobia, transphobia.

Underlying the growing divide between the richest one per cent and the rest of us are several intersectional layers, including its disproportionate impact on women, Indigenous and racialized peoples, immigrants, 2SLGBTQI+ (two-spirit, lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, intersex+) people, young people, and people requiring accommodations. These injustices are reflected in numerous avenues, including in the exploitation of workers and precarious working conditions; in the adverse impact of privatized public services; and in the barriers to accessing healthy and safe communities.

Instead of creating an environment of togetherness, the one per cent is capitalizing on the existing divisions among the working class. They are actively trying to fracture working class unity by implicating other equity-seeking groups in the process. This division is becoming heightened with much more precision and fervor as their self-interest – be it social, economic, political, and cultural – drives discriminatory policies that benefit that self-interest.

The Ford government has failed to adequately redress these structural and systemic injustices. In fact, they have pushed back on years of progress.

Ontario has the highest number of hate crimes reported across the country. Hate crimes have swelled against Muslim people by 207 per cent, against Black people by 84 per cent, and against Jewish people by 41 per cent in a one-year period. It is also important to note that in Canada, 53 per cent of hate crimes that are motivated by hatred of the victim's sexual orientation are violent crimes.<sup>xvii</sup>

And, these are only the hate crimes that have been reported. We cannot let hate be normalized.

The Ford government, however, has actively contributed to the rise of hate by both partaking in extremely problematic discourse as well as failing to speak out against harmful actions and language.

One of the government's earliest steps included withdrawing cooperation to help fund the resettlement of asylum seekers. In the 2019 budget, they once

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again targeted immigrants and refugees, stating that Legal Aid Ontario can no longer use provincial funds on these cases. In other words, the Ford government eliminated two thirds of funding for refugee and immigration cases.

As a result of this funding cut, several legal aid clinics were forced to lay off staff, stop accepting new cases, and discontinue certain services. Justice through the courts was delayed with longer hearings, greater postponements and adjournments, additional missed deadlines at the Immigration and Refugee Board, and unfilled adjudicator positions at the Human Rights Tribunal. These actions were undermining cases and discouraging vulnerable people from seeking relief. In December 2019, the Ford government announced its intent to cancel the planned cuts to legal aid funding – although the 30-per-cent budget cut in 2019 will remain.

In July 2018, the Ford government halted curriculum development on Indigenous culture, history, and contributions that was to be taught in elementary and secondary schools across the province (i.e., #62 of the Truth and Reconciliation call to actions). Further, they continue to make no movement towards ensuring access to clean drinking water for Indigenous communities.

In Autumn 2018, the Ford government disbanded expert committees that were tasked with developing comprehensive frameworks around ending violence against women and combatting Islamophobia, anti-Semitism, anti-Indigenous, and anti-Black racism. They have also failed to act on Justice Tulloch's Independent Street Checks Review recommendations – namely, eliminating carding in its entirety.

Shortly after disbanding the committees, the government refused to flow the promised funding increases of \$14.8 million to sexual assault centres – which was meant to increase the capacity of current centres as well as to open new centres in communities where none currently exist. They have also not corrected barriers and delays in receiving access to abortion services.

In November 2018, the Progressive Conservatives passed a transphobic policy resolution at their convention that called on the government to remove gender identity references from the sexual education curriculum. The government has now delayed introducing curriculum on gender identity and gender expression for two years.

**At the OFL, we believe that everyone must be treated fairly.**

**Recommendations:**

**Justice for all means that this government must...**

- // Promote justice and equity by repairing historic, discontinuing current, and preventing future oppression of Indigenous communities, communities of colour, migrant communities, deindustrialized communities, depopulated rural communities as well as other affected communities
- // Agitate for a whole-of-government approach that is equity focused and intersectional (e.g., anti-capitalist, anti-colonialist, anti-racist, feminist, anti-ableist, and 2SLGBTQI+ inclusive)

- // Challenge fascism, white supremacy, colonialism, racism, bigotry, misogyny, xenophobia, homophobia, and transphobia in all its forms
- // Eliminate systemic xenophobia, anti-Indigenous and anti-Black racism, anti-Semitism, and Islamophobia including from government polices and services – like policing institutions, school boards, children’s aid societies, the environment – the workforce as well as decision-making bodies (e.g., funding decisions)
- // Strengthen and expand the scope and mandate of the Anti-Racism Directorate
- // Abolish the discriminatory practice of racial profiling (e.g., carding)
- // Adopt the 94 Truth and Reconciliation Commission recommendations
- // Adopt the United Nations’ Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and support the principle of self-governance for Indigenous peoples
- // Demand immediate action on prosperity for all Indigenous peoples including, but not limited to, access to clean water, shelter, and food security
- // Ensure that the national inquiry into missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls reflects and supports the needs of Indigenous communities
- // Demand permanent resident status and family unity for all current migrants and refugees as well as landed status on arrival for those in the future
- // Establish Ontario as a sanctuary province for those that have been deported and treated negatively by policies of exclusion
- // Close the wage gap through funding, enforcing, and expanding pay equity and employment equity legislation
- // Reaffirm the commitment to the inviolable right of women and transgender persons to have autonomy of all decisions regarding their persons
- // Demand an economic justice strategy that promotes women’s meaningful participation in the workforce; recognizes the care penalty imposed in female-dominated employment; and improves access to public programs and services (e.g., child care)
- // End violence against women through a comprehensive action framework that focuses on prevention, supports, and services
- // Ensure adequate, stable, long-term funding for immigration and refugee legal aid services
- // Break down barriers for workers with accommodations and integrating persons with disabilities into every aspect of the workplace and society
- // Ensure that adequate supports are available in every community to meet the needs of all people with chronic, long-term disabilities
- // Establish the Disability Rights Secretariat

- // Eliminate homophobia and transphobia so every person feels safe to live authentically
- // Create 2SLGBTQI+ friendly environments, including for seniors, where people want to come out and live their authentic lives
- // Ensure that 2SLGBTQI+ people have access to appropriate and timely health care options that are friendly, competent, and meet their respective needs
- // Terminate the prevalence of suicide attempts among 2SLGBTQI+ youth through increased supports, like mental health services and housing
- // End violence against Trans peoples, particularly those that identify through an intersectional lens

# HEALTHY AND SAFE WORKPLACES AND COMMUNITIES FOR ALL



**Every worker must feel safe and empowered in the work that they do. It only takes a split second for a worker to become injured, permanently disabled, and/or ill from work.**

Not every worker, however, is covered by the workers' compensation system.

Many physical and mental injuries are denied, go unreported, or unattributed to their working conditions. For those who do have coverage, the Workplace Safety and Insurance Board (WSIB) is focused on reducing its own costs on the backs of injured workers. In September 2018, the WSIB announced an across-the-board average premium reduction for employers of nearly 30 per cent – in addition to the ten per cent rate reduction gifted over the last few years. And in September 2019, premiums were reduced by another 17 per cent. This means that the WSIB has eliminated its unfunded liability largely at the expense of providing benefits to injured workers and ensuring workplace health and safety.

Not every worker, however, makes it back home.

According to the WSIB in 2018, 228 people died from a work-related injury or illness in Ontario and since 2015, lost time injuries have increased by 33 per cent.<sup>xviii</sup> It is also important to acknowledge that many more workers' injuries, illnesses, and deaths have occurred that have not been appropriately attributed to their working conditions.

The Ford government has taken several steps backwards when it comes to protecting workers, including by opening the door for non-unionized companies in the construction trades to bid on and build public infrastructure projects. Unionized construction trades are leaders in health and safety. This government has not only placed worker and public safety at great risk, but they have also trampled collective bargaining agreements in the process. In addition, they have frozen proactive workplace inspections, shifted all in-person ESA-related inspections online, and are transitioning in-person health and safety training online.

Ontario's austerity agenda is increasingly making workers more disposable and eroding fairness in the workplace.

It is also important to recognize that the importance of health and safety extends beyond our workplaces to our communities and our environment.

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## Environment

Time is running out to take steps to keep our planet inhabitable. The United Nations has declared that we are less than 10 years away from irrevocable damage.<sup>xix</sup>

Today's children, and their children, are the ones who will live with the consequences of climate change – with the consequences of our actions. It is a reality that they have inherited.

In Ontario, for example, the Ford government's inaugural move was to eliminate the cap-and-trade program and cancel 758 green energy contracts.

They then unsuccessfully threatened to remove protections that prevented industries from polluting our drinking water – regulations that were introduced in response to the 2000 Walkerton tragedy where contaminated drinking water killed seven Ontarians and made thousands ill. In addition, the government was willing to allow developers – who are also donors to the PC party – to bypass regulations protecting the Greenbelt from urban development.

The Ford government did, however, eradicate obligations for businesses to publicly report on their use of toxic substances, further facilitating the production and pollution of these toxins. In addition, they have slashed flood protection funding in half, eliminated the 50 Million Tree Program, and revealed plans to potentially cancel Ontario's Blue Box recycling program.

Regressive actions and inaction have dictated the agenda for far too long in Ontario, in Canada, and across the globe.

We can still turn it around. We need a holistic response to climate change that addresses injustices and leaves no one behind.

**At the OFL, we believe that everyone must have access to healthy, safe, and sustainable communities and workplaces.**

### Recommendations:

**Healthy and safe workplaces and communities for all means that this government must...**

- // Guarantee universal workers' compensation for every worker in Ontario
- // Expand the definition of occupational diseases so workers are treated fairly and without discrimination
- // Expand the definition of compensable injuries to recognize various workplace-related hazards, including vicarious trauma and mesothelioma
- // Ensure workplace disability prevention initiatives are prioritized and properly funded (e.g., Workers Health and Safety Centre, Occupational Health Clinics for Ontario Workers, and Prevention Link)
- // Abolish the unfair practice of deeming at the WSIB
- // Require employer criminal negligence to become a routine part of every workplace death investigation
- // Hold employers accountable for the health and safety of their workers

and jailing negligent employers for killing workers

- // Require companies that use temp agencies are financially responsible under the WSIB for workplace deaths and injuries
- // Implement a zero-tolerance policy for toxic substances, such as asbestos and other harmful chemicals, in workplaces and ensuring strong enforcement
- // Introduce the precautionary principle approach for all new substances, processes, or job designs in the workplace
- // Collaborate with workers on a high standard, mandatory health and safety accreditation program
- // Ensure that health and safety as well as disability prevention training remains delivered by workers for workers in classroom settings
- // Secure for all people clean air and water, climate and community resiliency, healthy food, access to nature, and a sustainable environment
- // Achieve net-zero greenhouse gas emissions through a fair and just transition for all communities and workers
- // Create millions of decent, well-paying jobs and ensuring prosperity and economic security for all people
- // Invest in infrastructure and industry to sustainably meet the challenges of the 21st century
- // Hold big corporate polluters responsible for their actions

# CONCLUSION

## **NOTHING IS INEVITABLE OR UNCHANGEABLE.**

**Nothing is inevitable or unchangeable – not the retraction of decent working conditions; not the loss of middle-class jobs; not the rise in economic inequality; not the underfunding and privatization of our public services; not the prevalence of hate, violence, and discrimination; and not the destruction of our workplaces, communities, and planet.**

Ontarians require leadership that champions and acts on issues that have the greatest potential to improve the lives of the working class – moving us towards a long-term vision of strong public services, decent work, equity and justice, and healthy and safe workplaces and communities for all.

The Ontario Federation of Labour is hopeful that the preceding recommendations help inform the development of the 2020 budget as well as the upcoming legislative agenda.

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Ontario Federation of Labour  
2020 Pre-Budget Submission

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Standing Committee  
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January 2020



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**The Ontario Federation of Labour  
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